



The Marker Lamp



Volume 61

Number 2

Spring 2015

Animated Smashboard Gate in N scale

page 21

The Return of the Colorado and Silver River Empire

page 23

Old Yellow Box Kits

page 32

LDOPSig

page 38

Who's Who of Sound Decoders

page 44



In This Issue

President's Message	3
Up the Tracks	6
Train Room Confessions	9
Operations	12
LSR Convention	16
Round Town with Roy	49
Pass Exchange	52
Reports	53
Pike/Dealer Ads	64

Lone Star Region Call Board

LSR Officers

PRESIDENT
STEVE BARKLEY, MMR
2060 Belvedere Drive
Beaumont, Texas 77706
(210) 653-5947
baylormax@aol.com

VICE-PRESIDENT
BOB BARNETT
2925 Plumb Street
Houston, Texas 77005
(713) 660-8820
Barnett6@sbcglobal.net

SECRETARY
JEFF PALMER
2806 High Plateau Dr.
Garland, Texas 75044
(972) 495-2097
res06wqv@gte.net

BOARD ADVISOR
BILL MCPHERSON
4402 Vista Creek Dr.
Rowlett, TX 75088
(972) 463-9721
tpbill@verizon.net

TREASURER
DONNA ORR
2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Rockwall, TX 75087
(972) 722-4769
dlo-rls@sbcglobal.net

SECRETARY-EMERITUS
EUNICE LINDA
3028 Cumberland
Waco, Texas 76707-1219
(254) 754-5535
jlinda@hotmail.com

LSR Directors-At-Large

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
DUANE RICHARDSON, MMR
1122 Holland Drive
Garland, Texas 75040
(972) 495-6375 E-mail:
duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
CHUCK LIND, MMR
3680 CR 324
Navasota, Texas 77868
(979) 219-3305
Chucklind46@gmail.com

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
ART HOUSTON
209 Sugar Highland Blvd.
Houma, Louisiana 70360
(504) 723-9290
ahouston3@charter.net

LSR Division Directors

(1) COWCATCHER DIVISION
CHRIS ATKINS
1633 Parkside Trail
Lewisville, Texas 75077
(214) 222-1285
chris@railroadermodelers.com

(2) BAYOU DIVISION
ROD FREDERICKS
640 Chippenham Dr.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808
(225) 766-8014
fredericks.rod@gmail.com

(3) TRINITY RIVER DIVISION
JERRY HOVERSON, MMR
52 COUNTRY RIDGE ROAD
MELISSA, TX 75454
(972) 540-5315
jkhoverson@gmail.com

(4) CEN-TEX DIVISION
PETER KAZMIR
2022 Foothills
Leander, TX 78641-2376
(512) 259-6720
pakazmir@gmail.com

(5) DIVISION
DAVE LAMBERTS
3717 95th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79423-3811
(806) 792-7244
DavidWL1944@aol.com

(6) DIVISION
KEVIN BERGEMAN
3318 Windy Ridge Ct
San Antonio, TX 78259-2607
(210) 488-4370
kevin.bergeman@gmail.com

(7) DIVISION
DON P. KIMMELL
9132 Mansfield Road
Shreveport, Louisiana 71118
(318) 798-7718
elf4kcs@mac.com

(8) TEXAS GULF DIVISION
JIM LEMMOND
2821 Frostwood Circle
Dickinson, Texas 77539
281-534-6179
281-229-0845
jimlem@verizon.net



LSR Chairs

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
DUANE RICHARDSON, MMR
1122 Holland Drive
Garland, TX 75040
(972) 495-6375
duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

PUBLICATIONS-ML EDITOR
RILEY TRIGGS
1005 Robert E Lee Rd
Austin, Texas 78704
(512) 636-3521
rileytriggs@gmail.com

CONTEST CO-CHAIR
CHUCK LIND, MMR
3680 CR 324
Navasota, Texas 77868
(979) 219-3305
Chucklind46@gmail.com

CONVENTION
JACK MERKEL, MMR
2408 Whitewater Drive
Bertram, Texas 78605
(512) 355-3289
ElmerMerk@aol.com

HISTORIAN
JIM LONG, MMR
2404 Creek Ridge
Pearland, Texas 77581-5728
(281) 482-4987
(no email)

CONTEST CO-CHAIR
LOREN NEUFELD, MMR
9821 Oboe Dr.
Houston, Texas 77025
713-666-8451
lorenmr@aol.com

EVENTS
BILL DRYDEN
1411 Briar Hill Drive
Georgetown, Texas 78626
(469) 964-8571
bdr149@airmail.net

WEB SITE-PUBLIC RELATIONS
JEFF PALMER
2806 High Plateau Dr.
Garland, Texas 75044
(972) 495-2097
res06wqv@gte.net

NOMINATIONS
BLAKE BOGS
8202 Pine Thistle
Spring, TX 77379
(281) 655-0177
superchief15@yahoo.com

MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIRMAN
LARRY SWIGERT
6548 Clearhaven Circle
Dallas, Texas 75248
(972) 239-0909
LS4Results@aol.com

EDUCATIONAL CHAIR
TRACY MITCHELL, MMR
12018 Troulon
Houston, Texas 77072-4032
(281) 495-1669
E-mail: traymit@comcast.net

PHOTOGRAPHY CHAIR
DAVE LAMBERTS
3717 95th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79423-3811
(806) 792-7244
DavidWL1944@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIRMAN
MIKE MACKAY
1700 Desperado Road
Fort Worth, TX 76131
214-460-1329
mikemackey_tx@sbcglobal.net

NON-RAIL
VIRGINIA FREITAG
1835 Alta Vista
Houston, Texas 77023-2503
(713) 926-2993
v-gfreitag@comcast.net

YOUTH/PARLIAMENTARIAN
BOB MANGRUM, PHD
112 Broken Arrow St.
Early, Texas 76802-2531
(325) 643-1219
rmangrum@hputx.edu

The Marker Lamp

The Official Publication of
The Lone Star Region of the
National Model Railroad Association

Volume 61, Number 2

EDITOR

RILEY TRIGGS

1005 Robert E Lee Rd
Austin, Texas 78704-2026
512.636.3521
rileytriggs@gmail.com

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

GERT "SPEED" MULLER
gertmul@gmail.com

BOB BATSON

bobbatson48@gmail.com

ADVERTISING

DONNA ORR

2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Rockwall, TX 75087
972.342.8598
dlo-rls@sbcglobal.net

Visit the LSR's web page at:
www.lonestarregion.com

The editorial policy of The Marker Lamp, the official publication of The Lone Star Region, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroad, within the confines of good taste and responsibility. The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of The Lone Star Region of The National Model Railroad Association. Articles appearing in The Marker Lamp are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of The Lone Star Region or The National Model Railroad Association.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. Correspondence relating to Pike Ads and Dealer Ads should be addressed to Donna Orr, 2625 Rolling Meadows Dr., Rockwall, TX 75087 (972) 722-4769 dlo-rls@sbcglobal.net

*Cover photo
by Gert "Speed" Muller*

Submission Deadlines &
Advertising Closing Dates

Winter Issue.....January 15
Spring IssueApril 15
Summer Issue.....July 15
Fall Issue.....October 15

Internet Post Date:

Approx. 30 Days After Deadline.

Materials received after the deadline will be held for the next issue.



President's Message

by Steve Barkley, MMR
baylormax@aol.com

The convention is coming! The 2015 Lone Star Region Convention will be held in Beaumont, Texas July 22 – 26, 2015. The convention headquarters will be at the Holiday Inn Plaza in Beaumont. Check out the convention web site at: <http://lsr2015.com/>.

Rail Fanning Beaumont

Beaumont has several great locations to watch trains. First is the Amtrak depot located just off 11th Street. This is a new shelter type depot. It is open to the public and there is a police substation right next door.

Bring your lawn chair and enjoy an hour or two of train watching. You may see trains from any of these railroads: BNSF, Kansas City Southern, Union Pacific and Amtrak. Foreign power is common. There are several fast food restaurants close by as well as a Jason's Deli, Chili's, and other restaurants.

The courthouse in downtown Beaumont has a large parking lot located just west of the main building. That gives an open view to watch trains from all of the listed railroads. The railroad drawbridge over the Neches River is located just to the east of the courthouse. There is good public access including free parking at Riverfront Park to watch trains going over the drawbridge.

The Kansas City Southern has a small yard located just across from Lamar University. You'll see both the older light gray color scheme as well as the Southern Belle scheme on KCS diesels.

IRS 501(c)(3) Status

The Lone Star Region is now an IRS qualified 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donna Orr, our LSR Treasurer, volunteered to file the paperwork for the LSR to be designated as an IRS Qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Congratulations and thanks to Donna for doing this!

Many benefits will come from this. First, the LSR will be exempt from Texas Sales Tax for convention related purchases including restaurant and room charges paid by the LSR. This will reduce convention expenses by several hundred dollars per year.

Donations to the LSR are now tax deductible as charitable donations. My CPA tells me that expenses incurred by LSR officers and directors, including travel and lodging expenses, in furtherance of their duties for the LSR should be deductible.

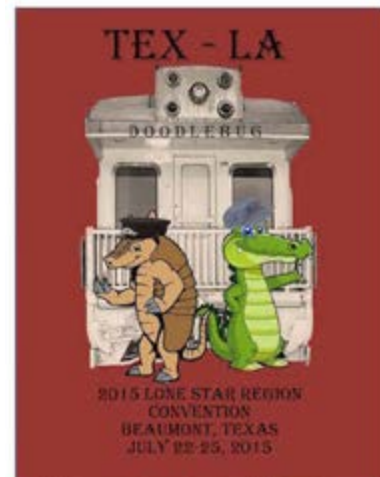
Of course, check with your own CPA or tax professional to confirm this. If you require confirmation of the LSR's status, the confirmation letter from the IRS may be downloaded from the LSR web site here:

http://lonestarregion.com/sites/default/files/documents/lsr_501c3/lsr_501c3.pdf

Laissez les bon Temps roulez!

Or, Let the Good Times Roll! Come to Beaumont July 22 – 26 to enjoy the LSR Convention. Watch trains, enjoy Cajun food, run trains on modular layouts to be set up at the convention hotel and reconnect with friends. Remember, nowhere in Beaumont is more than 15 – 20 minutes away from anywhere else in the city even during "rush hour." Restaurants and the convention hotel all have free parking.

Come see us! **ML**





Greasing the Pig

by Riley Triggs

rileytriggs@gmail.com

ponyrr.blogspot.com



Erie F3 No. 802A gets a lot of attention from a dedicated crew of workers. She will be in tip top shape in short order and ready to make the next run looking good and running well. Photo in collection of author.

I'm really excited with what is going on here at Marker Lamp World Headquarters, and it is a lot like what is happening in the photo above. I've always enjoyed the work I've done in publications, especially in the model railroading realm, but something special is materializing before my and your eyes in these pages: teamwork.

I've been editing the **ML** for a couple of years now, and it really feels like the publication is hitting on all 16 cylinders. The **ML** has had tremendous input starting from my first issue with great support from the directors, chairs and officers of the LSR and authors and

photographers from every corner of the region, and the momentum is growing every day for several reasons.

Beginning a couple of issues back, the **ML** has had direct and enthusiastic help from associate editors Bob Batson and Gert "Speed" Muller. They have solicited and written stories, edited copy and have provided much needed moral support.

The **ML** pages would be empty without a stable of regular contributors and a healthy flow of new ones keeping the pages full and interesting. The range of articles has been wide, and the subjects have touched on



The team of the Hoboken Shore Railroad sometime in the 1950s posing with one of their new GE 44 tonner locomotives. Photo in collection of Tim Stuy.

many aspects of the hobby already.

And from the quarterly *Pass Exchange* to *Up the Tracks* event calendar, to the President, Directors', and Chairs' Reports, there are people consistently donating their time and energy to keep the membership informed, educated, and connected through a common sounding board.

And if all of that weren't enough to fill these digital pages, there are two new columns starting this issue. One is about the art and craft of modeling and the other about the fun game of playing with those models.

Master model railroader Duane Richardson's new column *Train Room Confessions* will share whatever is in the works on his workbench at the moment. He will have tips and techniques for modeling that will help you with a wide range of projects in your own train room.

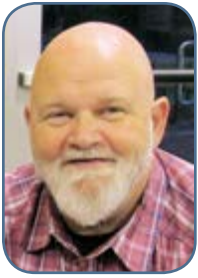
CenTex Division director Peter Kazmir begins his *Operations* column where he will share insights into the

growing trend of operating your model railroad. The first installment provides an overview to those who haven't started this sort of playing with their trains, yet. He'll show us just how fun this aspect of the hobby is, and leave everyone wondering, "why didn't I start having this fun sooner!"

All of these team members and more are making greasing this particular pig a fun and enriching experience, and I'd like to continue increasing the number of people who make the **ML** a part of their total hobby experience by writing, photographing and sharing their work.

Drop me line if you have an idea of how you want to participate, and we'll make you one of us grease monkeys.

Riley



Up The Tracks

By Bill Dryden NMRA & LSR Life Member

Here are upcoming events within the LSR of which I am aware. I will provide all the information YOU send me, or I can glean from other publications, websites, etc., for these events. Additional information may be available through the NMRA Magazine and/or various trade magazines or various websites. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change.

Please forward any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me via e-mail at bdr149@airmail.net. Column submission deadlines are the 15th of January, April, July and October; publication of the Marker Lamp is the middle of the following month.

Lone Star Region 64th Annual Convention 2015

The Lone Star Region NMRA 64th Annual Convention will be held in Beaumont July 22 – 25, 2015.

Check the Convention website <http://lsr2015.com/> or the LSR website <http://www.lonestarregion.com/content/convention-info> Come all!! PARTICIPATE!!!

RECURRING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

LSR Division 3 - Trinity River Division - Garland

The Trinity River Division meets on the Second Saturday of every month at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Allen. Occasionally the day or branch changes due to scheduling conflicts so pay close attention to the e-mail meeting notices that go out a week before the meeting. If you would like to be added to the e-mail list contact Jerry Hoverson at JKHoverson@tx.rr.com.

LSR Division 4 – Cen-Tex Division – Austin

The Cen-Tex Division meets quarterly at the main branch of the Round Rock Library in downtown Round Rock. Meetings include clinics, show-and-tell, DCC minute, social activities and a layout open house. For more information about upcoming meetings, see <http://centexnmra.org> or contact director@centexnmra.org to be added to our mail list.

Alamo Model Railroad Engineers - San Antonio

The Alamo Model Railroad Engineers meets the 2nd Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Zucht Building at the Texas Transportation Museum, 11791 Wetmore Rd., San Antonio TX. For more information call Peter Shavney (210) 317-3661 or Gene Turner (210) 355-2777; or visit the web site www.alamomodelrailroadengineers.com.

Houston Area Live Steamers

HALS has over 9,000 feet of track for you to enjoy and ride on most any Saturday of the year. Someone is usually there every Saturday with special run, operations, waybills/timetable, work and fun run days scheduled throughout the year. Our public run days are the third Saturday of the month March through November. Come see our 2,500 foot expansion in Phase 4. Model Railroaders (any scale) are welcome to attend most any time. Check our web site out at www.hals.org for schedule of events or e-mail Rick White – rick.white.jr@gmail.com for more information.

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs – Irving

The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the third Tuesday of the month. Visit the website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site and member clubs.

New Braunfels Railroad Museum

Kids Fun Day is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. New Braunfels Railroad Museum, 302 South San Antonio Street, in the 1907 Restored Railroad Depot; New Braunfels, TX. Museum phone (830) 627-2447. Kids of all ages will have the opportunity to run model trains and become a Jr. Engineer. Also among the displays at the Kids Fun Day will be a large US Army Model Garden (G) Scale and Lego Trains. Visit our Steam Engine, Caboose, Dining Car (available for Birthday Parties) and Box Car. There will be other fun, train related activities,

additional model trains, train artifacts, our 1907 depot are on display. The Railroad Museum opens at 10:00 am on Saturdays. For field trip scheduling and more information, call Howard Young (210) 542-6121, or visit us at www.nbrmm.org.

Texas Western Model Railroad Club – Forest Hills

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club meets for its business meeting every 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM. The Club is located at 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. For more information: (682) 587-2092 or www.twmrc.org or email cao@twmrc.org.

EVENTS AND SHOWS

May

16th – 17th Jefferson Train Days (Sponsored by the Jefferson Historical Society & Museum and in part by the City of Jefferson); Sat. 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Sun. 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; \$15.00 (4 Destinations for One Price (R. D. Moses T&P Model Train Exhibit, Rail Baron Jay Gould's Business Car "ATALANTA" Tour, Historic Jefferson Railway Narrow Gauge Train Ride and Train Show at Jefferson Transportation Center), Children under 6 Free; 223 West Austin Street, Jefferson, TX. For more information, call Norman Buell (903) 665-7682 or www.jeffersontraindays.com, www.jeffersonmuseum.com or www.jeffersonrailway.com

June

22nd – 28th The 2015 Texas Express (Sponsored by the International Convention of the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society). Crowne Plaza, Addison, TX. For times and registration information <http://atsfrr.com/convention/Dallas/Index.htm>

July

25th – 26th 2014 SAMRA 13th Annual Summer Family Train Show. Sat. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adult \$7, 16 & under Free (Limit 3) with paid adult admission. Carmack Event Center, 1948 Austin Highway, San Antonio, TX. For more information: <http://www.samratx.org/shows.html> or jamboree@samratx.com.

August

23rd – 29th Portland Daylight Express – 2015 NMRA National Convention. Portland, OR.
For more information: <http://www.nmra2015portland.org/>

September

2nd – 5th 35th Annual National Narrow Gauge Convention. Houston, TX.
For more information <http://www.nngc-2015.com/>

19th – 20th 33rd Annual Temple Model Train Show. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Adults \$6.00, Children 12 and under free with adult, discount for seniors and active duty military and dependents. Frank Mayborn Convention Center, Main Hall, Rooms 1-7, and Lobby, 3303 N. 3rd Street, Temple, TX.
For more information: www.centramod.com.

26th – 27th 1st Annual Fall Plano Train Show. (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs) Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$8, Kids Under 12 Free with Paid Adult Admission, Scouts & Scout Leaders in Uniform, Admission is Free. Plano Centre; 2000 East Spring Creek Parkway; Plano, TX.
For more information, visit <http://www.dfwtrainshows.com>.

October

3rd – 4th Galveston Model Railroad Train Show. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Adults \$8, Kids Under 12 Free. Galveston Railroad Museum, 2602 Santa Fe Place, Galveston, TX. For more information Sandy Cobb or Morris Gould (409) 765-5700 or <http://www.galvestonrrmuseum.com/events.html>

3rd – 4th 2015 San Antonio Train Show. (Sponsored by Alamo Model Railroad Engineers) Sat. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Adults \$11, Children \$6 (10-17). Expo Hall A at the Freeman Coliseum, 3201 E. Houston St., San Antonio TX. For more information <http://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/event-amre-train-show.php>.

10th – 11th 2015 Texas Western 2nd Annual Train Show. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 12:00 pm to 4:00 p.m. Admission \$7, Kids under 12 Free (**Present this ad for \$1 off!**). Forest Hill Civic and Convention Center, 6901 Wichita Street, Forest Hill, TX. For more information: (682) 587-2092 or www.twmrc.org or email cao@twmrc.org.

16th – 17th Grapevine Texas Train Show. Sat. 12:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Sun. 10:00 pm to 4:00 p.m. Admission \$5, Kids under 12 Free. Grapevine Convention Center, 1209 South Main Street, Grapevine, TX. For more information: (214) 329-9818 or <http://www.texastrainshow.com>

16th – 17th Southwest O Scale Meet; Fort Worth Academy, 7301 Dutch Branch Road, Fort Worth, TX. For times and registration information <http://www.oscalesw.com>

Oct 31st – Nov 1st New Braunfels Railroad Museum's 7th Annual Train Show. Sat. 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 pm to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$7 (18 – up), Children \$2 (5 – 17). New Braunfels Civic Center, 375 S. Castell Ave., New Braunfels, TX. For more information call Jim Edmondson (830) 629-2071 or JEdmondson@satx.rr.com

November

21st Texas Train Show. Admission is \$5 at the Door / Kids enter FREE! Christopher Hall, 1602 Thousand Oaks Drive, San Antonio, TX. For more information <http://www.texastrainshow.net>

January 2016

16th – 17th Dallas Area Train Show. (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs) Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$8, Kids Under 12 Free with Paid Adult Admission, Scouts & Scout Leaders in Uniform, Admission is Free. Plano Centre; 2000 East Spring Creek Parkway; Plano, TX. For more information, visit <http://www.dfwtrainshows.com>.

30th – 31st SAMRA 40th Annual Jamboree & Train Show. Sat. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 p.m. Adult - \$7, Under 16 Free (Limit 3) with paid adult admission Carmack Event Center, 1948 Austin Highway, San Antonio, TX. For more information: <http://samratx.org/>.

Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event – Column submission deadlines are the 15th of January, April, July and October; publication of the Marker Lamp is the middle of the following month.



The MODEL Part of Model Railroading

By Duane Richardson, MMR
duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com



It's been a while since I've written anything for the Marker Lamp, and while we might see more *For the Narrow Minded* articles as time goes along, I have been talking with Riley about starting a new column. Here we will talk about something that is getting lost in our hobby, and that is the actual MODEL part of model railroading. With this in mind, for this column we will talk about general modeling techniques and philosophy, project specific things where I may cover the build of a single model or setting a scene, super detailing, weathering and such. In short, it will be a journey through whatever is on my workbench and or on my mind at the time. Yep...you might want a helmet. It could be a bumpy ride.

For this issue, I already have a request to talk about modifying vehicles. Now why would you ever give a second thought to changing the vehicles on your lay-

out? They come with great details and are usually painted really well. Why change that? For the answer let's start at the beginning.

If you have read any of my columns here in the *Marker Lamp*, or in the HOn3 Annual over the years, or have been to any of my clinics, there is a theme you have heard me preach on many times. It's to have something truly unique. Something special that you won't find on anybody else's layout. You've probably heard me mention that as a kid I can remember going on layout tours with my Dad and seeing the Campbell's Coal Tower, the Campbell's water tank, the Campbell's Saez Sash and Door (sometimes even both parts), the Campbell's Richmond Barrel Work and so on. Then we would go to the next layout and guess what I saw? The Campbell's coal tower, the water tank, Saez Sash and Door... If you

were lucky they were at least painted a different color. My first real observation in the hobby was that too many times we all have the same kits and they are all built by the instructions. I vowed to have as many things on my future layout that wouldn't be anywhere else. All of that to say this, with a small amount of effort you can make a few pieces that will make your work stand out.

Your automobiles are one of the fastest ways to gauge the era of your railroad and to make it stand out. While I would agree that the cars we have available now are really nice they still don't look completely real. When you look at photographs of model trains there are two things that tend to stand out that it's not real...the people and the cars. Usually it's the fact that there isn't many of either and the ones that are there just stand out as a model. With a few simple changes we can fix that problem and better yet, have cars on our layout that do not look exactly the same as everybody else's. Remember, unless they are new and on a car lot, cars are like snow flakes. No two are the same. Now, not every car needs to be filthy or showing some sort of damage. But having every car on the layout all bright and shiny is a just not realistic.

Some modifications require the car to be taken apart while some can be done easily before you take that step. First, let's talk about the things we can do without taking the car apart.

For starters, the cars that we buy are just too glossy. Simply mask off the windows and spray it down with some dull coat. You can also take the extra step and just mask what the windshield wipers clean off. The dull coat will make the windows 'dirty' but leave clean glass where the wipers have washed them off.

The second thing is that most of our cars must have solid wheels instead of having air in their tires. Take a look at cars on the layout and then go look at your own car. Look at how the tires bulge at the bottom showing the cars weight. We can do this on our models by first taking a file and making a flat spot on each tire. Rotate the tire so the flat spot is on the ground. Next, take a small amount of thick glue (like Alene's Tacky Glue) and place a small bead of the glue where the tire meets the ground. After it's dry, paint it to match the color of the tire. The glue will act as the bulge in the tire and make our cars look like they have weight.

As you drive around pay attention to how many cars you see with body damage. Chances are there are a lot of them. We should see some on our layouts as well. By masking off a hood, door or fender you can paint it with some primer to show a car that is having some body work done. Another neat option I have used is to take a Prismacolor Colored Pencil and draw in some spots on part of the car with one that is a shade of pink to look like the car has some body filler (Bondo) showing. Mismatched hoods or doors can help make a car stand out.

Another huge thing that can be done easily is to simply add license plates. License plates are not only a nice, and often overlooked, detail but it can also help

frame the era of your railroad. You can find them online easily for all the states and from all kinds of years. For example, my layout is set in September 1957 in south-



western Colorado. So, I found 1956 and 1957 license plates for both Colorado and New Mexico. Eventually I will probably add a few 1 off plates for some of the other surrounding states. For N and HO the plates themselves are so small that you probably can't read them. For larger scales you can take a step further and change the lettering on the plates to truly make them unique. This can be done very simply on any computer.

Trucks offer even more options for modifications. The easiest is to add a load. Trucks offer some of the widest variety of modification options. For wide loads you can add extended rear view mirrors. Remove the bed from a pickup and scratch build a flatbed or make it a stake side. This can help you by hauling something that supports a business on your layout. Oh, and the bed you removed can be made into a trailer and pulled behind another truck. Trucks can be made into gas haulers or tow trucks. Farm vehicles or work trucks. Many of these options however, will require some more advanced modifications.

For more advanced changes we usually have to take the car apart. Most of the cars can be taken apart by

drilling out the rivets that hold it together. Once apart a really simple change is to put people in the car. You will usually have to cut the legs off a seated figure to make them fit.

Another easy modification is to cut away the top of a window or two so the car looks like it has the window rolled down part of the way or you can cut it out all together so the window is down. You can also use an X-acto to carve in some cracks to represent a broken window. If you can find a figure with their elbow out you can cut that figure so that they have their elbow leaning on the door frame as they cruise down the road.

Another obvious problem is that all of the cars have their wheels pointed straight ahead. While you have the car apart you can bend a Z shape in the axle wire that will allow you to show the wheels turned in one direction or the other. It's surprising how much that that one tip alone can make a difference in a scene. Many of us here in the LSR live on flat terrain. In the hills and mountains you turn the wheels on your car when you park so if the car rolls it will hit the curb and not whatever is downhill from it. Having this detail in a scene is subtle but it can really add to the realism.

Another neat option is to have doors, trunk or the hood open on a car. The first step here is to use something to make a temporary mold of the car part you wish to modify. For example, let's say we are going to make a little scene of a person changing a flat tire. We would modify the trunk of the car to have it open.

Using a product like Clean Clay from Alumilite you can press the car into the clay to make the mold. Mix some casting resin per the directions and cast the trunk. Using a Dremel and some files you can cut out the parts from the car. Then, using the new cast part you can glue it onto the car. Paint the car, remove one wheel and prop up the car on a jack. Have the wheel you removed leaning against the car. You can also buy tire and wheel castings so you can add the spare or 'flat' to your scene.

An extra detail would be to find a casting that is just a plane wheel and tire. Then you could make a small hubcap from tinfoil and place it on the ground next to

the scene...or you could have a small kid helping his Dad change the tire. (Maybe an "Oh Fudge" moment like in the movie *The Christmas Story*). On that note, a missing hubcap on a car can be a nice touch.

One other feature you can add with the car apart is to add lights. Head lights and tail lights can be done with surface mount LED's or fiber optics. Turn signals can be done with a flashing LED (or have one that feeds both sides for emergency flashers). They can also be used for police, fire and ambulances.

Simple observation can teach you a lot about any modeling subject. With the cameras on our phones able to take decent pictures take advantage and start building a library of reference pictures. Whenever you see something that would be a nice detail take a picture. If you are like me you'll forget by the time you build the model so having a file full of reference material can really save the day. It's those extra steps and extra details that will give you that unique model.

For more information check out the article Jim Vail wrote in the Jan/Feb 2015 *Narrow Gauge Gazette*. Also, there is a really good article in the November 2013 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman* on modifying trucks. If you would like to see some of this done live I will be teaching a clinic on this at the National Narrow Gauge Convention this fall in Houston.

If you have something that you would like for me to cover please feel free to contact me, and I'll see what I can do about digging up some information. duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

Until next time, keep the boiler full, the fires hot, and your wheels on the rails. **ML**



Rules of the Game

By Peter Kazmir
pakazmir@gmail.com



Fig 1. David Barrow aligns a route on Tommy Holt's Western Pacific 1st Subdivision

Have you been interested in operations but don't know where to start? Well pull up a chair, my friend: you've come to the right place.

When I first started operating model railroads, starting with Tommy Holt's WP First Sub, I had no idea what I was getting into. My objective was to play with the trains on a layout more interesting than a 4x8 oval, and that was about it. However, I quickly learned that playing a game with rules is a lot more fun than playing without.

Real railroads exist to move things from one place to another – safely, on-time and profitably (and not

usually in that order). Over time, they've established a rather extensive set of rules to accomplish those goals.

Model railroad operators are simply modeling the real railroads' jobs and rules. Just like with scenery, track planning or any other aspect of model railroading, you can do that as faithfully to the prototype as you want.

In future issues, I will write columns about different aspects of model railroad operations. In this issue, I'll start with a general overview to get you ready for your first operating session.

There are an almost infinite number of ways to operate, but most operating sessions have several things in common:

Etiquette

This is a good place to start since it can make the difference between a good operating session and a bad one. As in pretty much anything, follow the golden rule and you should be fine. Remember that you're "playing" with some potentially expensive "toys" (both in terms of money and time investments).

Some more specific guidelines: Be on time. Don't touch the layout or pick up rolling stock unless the host says it's okay. Ask before taking pictures. Ask questions if you're not sure. Let the host know if you've experienced a problem such as derailment or an erratic locomotive.

At the same time, remember that the point of an operating session is to have fun!

Jobs

Modeling prototypical jobs is a common aspect to operations, especially on larger layouts. In addition to engineers, you might see other jobs such as yardmasters, yard switchers, conductors, station agents or dispatchers (see Fig 1).

Just as on a real railroad, you probably want to start with a more "entry-level" job with someone more experienced to help you (such as an engineer paired with a conductor or a yard switcher receiving instructions from a yardmaster) if you're new to operations.

Tools

However the layout operates, it will be moving and switching trains. These days, most layouts use one of a few different brands of throttles – but you should still ask how to use them on that layout. (For example, the layout may use different function buttons for different DCC effects than the defaults, or maybe the host has programmed an insane amount of momentum into the locomotives. Not that I've experienced that first hand or anything.)

Learn how to uncouple cars without picking them up or derailling them. One common way is to use uncoupling picks, usually thin plastic or wood sticks that you insert between the couplers to open them up. Another common way is to use magnets to open the couplers. Ask for a demonstration, someone will be happy to help.

Fast clocks are also a common feature of operating sessions. A fast clock is simply a clock that has been re-gearred (or programmed) to run faster than usual to compensate for the much shorter distances model trains have to travel compared to the prototype. A 4-to-1 fast clock increments a "minute" every 15 seconds of real time.

If there is a timetable, dispatcher instructions, or switching instructions that give a particular time, the layout will probably have one or more fast clocks in view so you can keep track of the time.

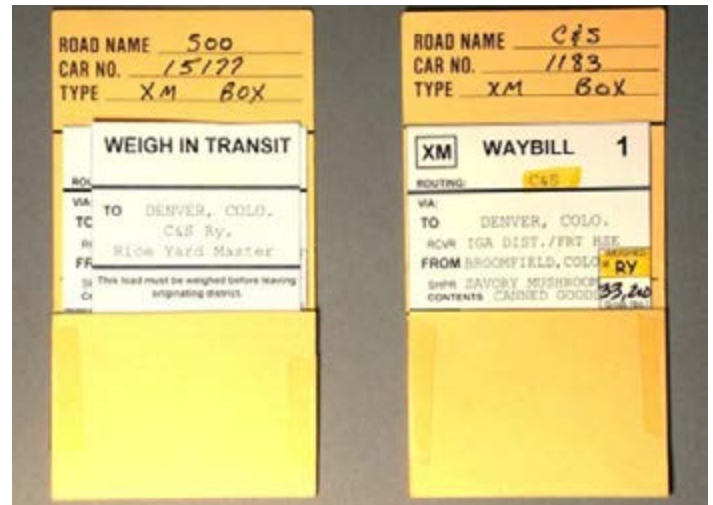


Fig 2. Car cards from David Nicastro's Moffat Tunnel Route layout

Forwarding Cars

There are many different methods used to determine what cars go where. Two common methods (which can be combined) are car cards and waybills, and switch lists.

One example of car cards and waybills is pictured in Fig 2. With this type, the car card simply tells you the owner of the car, the car number, and the car type. (More complex cards may include additional information and instructions.) The waybill will tell you where that car should go during that particular operating session, such as a particular on-layout customer ("IGA Distribution Freight House") or an off-layout city ("Chicago"). More complex waybills could include routing ("Via AT&SF Interchange in Fort Worth") or other instructions ("Weight in Transit").

One rule that is almost universal: always make sure your cars and their car cards stay together. Double-check the cars against the car cards before moving them. If you set out a car at a siding, leave the car card with the car (usually in a pocket on the front the layout). Nothing is more frustrating than trying to find one particular box car somewhere on the layout.

Switch lists (as the example pictured in Figure 3) are hand-written or computer-generated instructions for what to do with a set of cars, typically a series of instructions similar to "Pick up Santa Fe box car 12531 from Bob's Lumber and deliver it to yard track 4." It might include more details such as the order you should put the cars in on the destination track or a time that you should pick up or deliver the car(s).

Whether you are using switch lists or waybills, I strongly suggest that you consider all of the instructions

FOREMAN'S WORK LIST

DELIVER THIS LIST TO YARDMASTER AT END OF EACH TRIP

List all cars switched, including cars moved from one spot to another on some Industry Track, also cars from or to hold or Storage Tracks. When tracks are numbered, use track number instead of name. When car cannot be spotted or picked up, show cause in memo column, using number designated below, and also show in some column on what track cars not spotted were placed.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Gate locked | 6. No one on hand to direct switching. | 9. Track in bad order. |
| 2. Track full. | 7. Ordered placed in preference. | 10. Switch spiked. |
| 3. Spot ordered to occupied. | 8. Spotted—No more cars wanted. | 11. Car in bad order. |
| 4. Obstruction on track. | | 12. Short of time. |
| 5. Oil car connected. | | 13. Loading not completed. |
| | | 14. Billing not ready. |

SHEET NO. _____ DATE 5-9 1966ENGINE NO. 708 SHIFT COMMENCED 9:15 A.M.NAME OF FOREMAN Kazmir, P.

Initial	Car Number	L Load X Mty.	From Track or Industry	To Track or Industry	Time Set Out or Picked up	Memo.
CO	-849	L	STK T3	KAISER		
WP	6584	L				
WP	6639	L				
WP	6759	X				
WP	-803	L		JAMIESON		
WP	-905	L		LIV. TEAM		
SNPX	-390	L				
WP	-260	L				
WP	-325	L		COAST		
WP	9010	L		ARMCO 3		
UP	9045	L				
NP	4804	L	LIV. TEAM	STOCKTON		
WP	-502	X		YARD		
WP	-551	X				
WP	-530	X	COAST			
SNPX	-119	L	LOX-2			
SNPX	1549	L				
SNPX	-900	L				

Fig 3. Switch list (called a work list on the WP) for the Rock Switcher job on Tommy Holt's Western Pacific 1st Subdivision layout

for a particular train and think about how you will carry them out BEFORE you start moving. For example, you might want to wait to work facing-point moves on your way back to the yard (when they will become trailing-point). I've seen several hosts include suggestions for different jobs to help operators save time as well.

Rules of the Road

I think this bit is what intimidates new operators more than anything else. Many layouts with operations have some fairly complex rules, often modeled (or copied exactly) from prototypes. What does a red-over-yellow signal mean? Do I have to stop some place before I enter the yard? How do I use the horn and bell at crossings or when moving in the yard?



Fig 4. Signals protect movement on a railroad - whether it is a model or the prototype.

My advice is to get a brief introduction to the important rules (like the actions for which you need a dispatcher's permission and how to get that permission) before your first session and then operate the first couple of times with a partner who can point out some of the more obscure rules and show you how to do things as you operate.

If you eventually decide that the rules in place at a particular layout just aren't for you, don't give up on operations. Look around for a different layout with different rules or think about hosting operating sessions with your own rules.

Managing Trains

Railroads have different ways of managing rail traffic. You'll need to understand the basics of the method(s) used for your operating session. I'll go into a lot more detail in future columns, but the most common methods I've seen are:

- **Centralized Track Control** (or CTC), where a dispatcher uses remote-controlled switches and signals to manage the flow of trains on the railroad. Train crews will typically communicate with the dispatcher via radio or telephones.
- **Timetable and Train Orders**, where trains follow predetermined instructions (in a timetable) unless superseded by train orders conveyed to the train from a dispatcher. Typically train crews are not in

direct contact with the dispatcher (or his or her agents) except at specific stations on the railroad. (A more modern version of this is Direct Traffic Control, or DTC, where the train orders or track warrants are communicated via radio.)

- **Dark Territory**, where the track is usually not controlled by a dispatcher. Instead, trains must follow special rules (such as running slowly enough or flagging other trains) to prevent collisions and derailments.
- **Yard Limits** are also common. They can operate similarly to dark territory or can have some combination of methods like Automatic Block Signaling and yardmaster control depending on the layout.

Of course the layout may not have any of these things. It could just be up to the engineers/conductors to make sure they don't run their trains into each other, or it could be that some other method(s) are in place.

Running Trains

Finally! Let's move that throttle into notch eight and highball!

If your job for an operating session is to run trains outside of a yard, you could be assigned a train that runs at a particular time on the timetable, a dispatcher could ask for volunteers to run the train when the time comes, or you could sign up for particular trains on a call board. Some layouts even use operator seniority to determine the order in which operators can request certain jobs or trains.

Some layout rules ask for even more realism. For example, you could be asked to wait 5 minutes on the fast clock before moving a train that has just been assembled (to simulate walking the train and a brake test), or you could be asked to simulate stopping and waiting for a brakeman to throw a switch. On other layouts, this level of realism won't be expected.

No matter what system you use to run the trains, try to control your locomotives as realistically as practical. Start and stop smoothly and don't speed (or crawl) unrealistically.

Putting It All Together

Typically, an operating session will flow something like this:

- The operators will be invited to participate. The host may ask at that point what jobs everyone is interested in and assign jobs ahead of time.
- The group will gather for the session. There might be a brief discussion about changes, new rules, or problems on the railroad. The timetable for that session could be reviewed. If jobs haven't been determined yet they'll be determined at this point.
- Operators with jobs starting immediately (like a dispatcher or yardmaster) will go to their jobs and the fast clock will be started.
- During the session, train crews will be called or will run their trains according to the timetable or call board.
- At the end of the session, the fast clock is stopped and the group will often get back together to discuss any problems that were encountered, to ask questions and to make suggestions for future sessions.

This may sound like a lot to take in. I don't want to give the impression that operations have to be complex or hard to learn – they absolutely don't have to be. Use common sense and common courtesy, and I suspect you'll find (as I have) that operations can be an infinitely interesting and fun aspect of model railroading.

For more information about operations, check out some of these links:

- [The Operator's Guide to Better Model Railroad Operation](#)
- [The Operations Special Interest Group \(OPSIG\)'s Introduction to Operations](#)
- [Model Railroad Operation: A New Adventure](#)
- [Realistic Model Railroad Operation \(Second Edition\)](#)
- [Designing Model Railroad Operations](#)

See you down the tracks! **ML**

UPDATE

Beaumont, TX
July 22-25, 2015

by George Bohn

Tex and Al have been working to resolve several issues with reserving rooms for the proper dates and rates. Our contact at the Holiday Inn Plaza has corrected the issues that we know of so far and if there are any other issues, please email the Convention Chairman. The contact also gave us the following information for everyone to use when registering for a room:

Group Name: 2015 LSR CONVENTION

Group Code: ULS

Group Rates:

Standard Double/King: \$95.00

Corporate Suite: \$105.00

Executive Suite: \$ 115.00

This rate includes complimentary breakfast buffet coupons per room, per night based on occupancy. We offer a full, hot, American breakfast buffet with made to order eggs, omelets, waffles, fruit, yogurt, etc. For reservations, please call:

Hotel Name: Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Beaumont Plaza
Hotel Phone Number: 1-800-Holiday or 409-842-5995

Hotel Website: <http://www.holidayinn.com/beau-mont-plaza> *You may make reservations online utilizing the group code listed above**

Please note that the online system is date and room type sensitive. Should you experience any difficulties with the link please contact me directly at 409-842-7808. I work Monday-Friday 8-5 and receive a heavy call volume, if I am unable to answer please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Chrishanna Fisher Group Rooms Coordinator | Prism Hotels & Resorts Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Beaumont Plaza.

The Prototype and Non-rail tours have been firmed up, with times for both listed below. Remember that meals on these are on your own at a restaurant that is part of the tour. We are also adding a Prototype Event (on your own, with maps

for guides) to the Beaumont Amtrak station, where a multitude of rail traffic goes by each day. The Convention will be furnishing a cooler of drinks at the station for those that want to partake of this tour.

There are quite a few fast food restaurants close by for lunch. Bring your lawn chairs and cameras to capture railroading from 8 to 11 on Friday, July 24. This event will be during the prototype tour to Rescar and Sabine River Northern. Those tours will be limited to 50 people due to regulations at the companies being visited. Each person on the Rescar/Sabine River Northern tour will need to wear long pants, no sleeveless shirts, and closed toe shoes (steel toes aren't required).

Clinics are moving forward also. We will still be having the Clinics for Kids during the convention also. There will be at least 2 of these clinics with one being on module building and another on tree building.

Tex and Al wants to remind anyone who is planning on using the new NMRA member discount for the convention that they must have joined the NMRA between July 1, 2014 and July 15, 2015. Please pay the price on the registration form when you sign up and a refund will be given to you at the convention registration. Please send your NMRA number to George Bohn the Convention Chairman (gbohn@gt.rr.com) so your membership can be verified and the refund issued.

My apologies for this offer being confusing and any misunderstandings that occurred from an earlier form that had this option on it.

With 2 ½ months left till the convention, we hope that everyone is getting their rooms and registrations set. We are still working on several surprises for the convention, so stay tuned. Watch for email blasts to be coming out starting next week. Hope to see everyone here in Beaumont.

For a continuously update schedule, please see the LSR2015.com web site. **ML**

TexLa Doodlebug

Beaumont, TX
July 22-25, 2015

by George Bohn

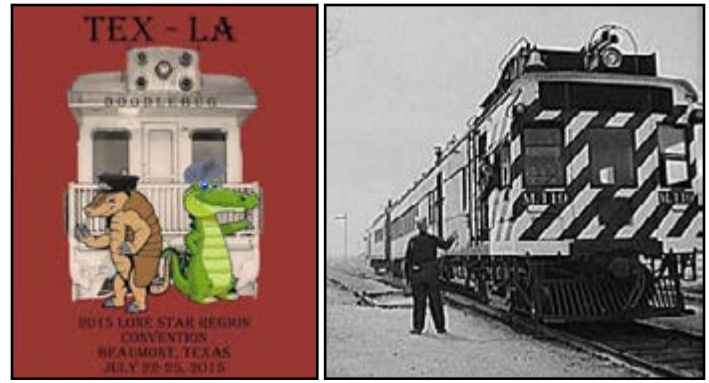
Tex and Al would like to report that events for the convention for July 22-25, 2015 are moving forward. Remember to reserve your rooms at the Holiday Inn Plaza off Walden Road in Beaumont. The room rates will be \$95 per night and every guest in each room will receive a \$10 breakfast buffet coupon. Call the hotel at 409-842-5995 and tell the desk that you are reserving rooms for the "2015 LSR Convention". This hotel is right off of IH10 on Beaumont's west side and there are several restaurants in the area.

Tex and Al would like to remind everyone that Dr. John B. McCall has agreed to be the keynote speaker and one of the convention clinicians. Dr. McCall is a foremost authority on the Santa Fe, especially Doodlebugs. He has written several books on the Santa Fe Railroad.

Tex reports that two Prototype tours are being set up for this year. One will be to the Sabine River Northern Railroad locomotive shop in Orange. The SRN has several different types of locomotives at their shop, including GP-7's, Gen-Sets, and some newer SW1500's. This railroad is a shortline running between Orange and Bessmay (Buna), with a short branch from Buna to Evadale. The line is owned by International Paper Company as part of their operations in Orange.

The second tour will be to the ResCar car repair facility in Orange where we will get a shop tour. We will divide up into two groups to visit these tour spots and will come back together to take a short tour of the Orange SP Depot that will be in the process of being restored. This depot is one of only three "Queen Anne" style depots built by the SP in Texas and is the only surviving one. These tours will cost an extra fare of \$25.

Al gives us a rough timetable that will soon be finalized: Wednesday will be arrival day with registration starting at 3 pm (check-in time for the hotel is 4 pm). The modular layouts for our operating sessions will be going up in the two grand ballrooms (we have 3 layouts committed and will have 6-8 on hand for op-sessions). At 6 pm, there will be a bus waiting to take everyone that signs up to a Louisiana casino for a 3 hour session, returning by 11pm. There will also be another opportunity on Friday evening to again go to a different Louisiana



casino. These trips will be available as an extra fare for \$20 to go one night and \$30 if you would like to go both nights.

Thursday morning will bring the beginning of clinics, including a new idea, "Clinics for Kids" which will feature kids doing the clinician role for other kids. Hopefully our members out there will bring their children to the convention to learn about our great hobby and how we do the things we do. Clinics will run during the day till 5. At 5 will begin op sessions in the layout room for those who want to try their hands at operation. From 6 to 8 a Cajun Style buffet will be served in the atrium, with desserts continuing until 9. This will be a come and go buffet, so everyone can walk in and out as needed while operating trains down the hall. This buffet cost is included in the registration.

Thursday will also bring a [Non-rail tour to Shangri La gardens](#) and [Presbyterian Church in Orange](#). An on your own lunch will be at [Old Orange Café](#) before returning to the convention hotel. This tour will cost \$30 per person. Friday morning will bring our prototype tours, ending with an on your own lunch at [Robert's Meat Market and Restaurant](#) (be able to order from menu or go through steam table). After returning to the hotel, we will have some more clinics. Those that stay behind on Friday from the casino will have several clinics to go. Saturday morning will bring the last of our clinics.

Our annual meeting will begin at 1 pm and BOD will meet afterward. Our adult beverage time will begin at 5:30 and last till 6:45, with our annual banquet beginning at 7 pm. As at all conventions, we will have a contest room and a silent auction room. Our president has also contacted the RPM group to see if they would like to display some of their prototype models for us.

Tex wants everyone to know that the registration forms will be coming out with the ballots in the very near future. Our registration cost this year will be \$100, which includes both the Cajun Buffet and the Banquet. If we have any make and take clinics this year, we will have those listed on the registration form and notify everyone. If needed, we can arrange for child care with activities in one room while parents are attending casino trip or

another tour. We are hoping that everyone will come visit us in the TexLa part of our great LSR. Division 8 hopes that it will be a super time.

FLASH: All new NMRA members that have joined the association since July 1, 2014 can receive a special "Newcomers" rate of \$75.00 when they register for the convention. Also, those that register prior to May 1, 2015 can register for a rate of \$90.00 (early bird) and those registering starting May 1, 2015 will have a rate of \$100.00. Be sure and register early and reserve your room early so that you can get great rates. Looking forward to having as many of our model railroad friends as possible attending the TexLa Doodlebug Convention in beautiful Southeast Texas. **ML**



Great modeling on display



ResCar car repair facility prototype tour in Orange



"Klinics for Kids"



Tour the Sabine River Northern Railroad locomotive shop in Orange



Modular layouts of all scales



Kids attractions

NOW AVAILABLE!

Color



Pike and Dealer Ads



Pike and dealer ads are now available in color for the same price! Share your railroad or advertise your business to others while supporting the Lone Star Region.

- Do you have a herald for your railroad?
- Is there a unique feature?
- What is the name of your hotshot freight or crack passenger service?

Let everyone know about it with a color ad!

Pike ads are **\$8 per year** and dealer ads are **\$20 per year**.

Checks should be made out to:
LSR NMRA

Then send to:
Donna Orr
2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Rockwall, TX 75087

Ads can then be sent as a JPG file attached to an email to:
rileytriggs@gmail.com

Animated Smashboard Operations on the Deep River Southern

Text and photos by Dave Salamon



When the surveyors of the Deep River Southern had planned their route between Green Valley and Port Allen the competing Frisco already had track down in Green Valley and the only possible route was for the Deep River Southern to cross over the Frisco. An agreement was established and the Deep River Southern continued across the Frisco with the caveat that the Frisco was the first one through the valley would control all operations of the crossing. Along with the crossing and installation of a manually operated smash-board (gate) the Deep River Southern and Frisco added interchange tracks at this location which have benefited both railroads. The Frisco offered to install a tower at this location to protect the crossing and charge that back to the Deep River Southern who in turn said they couldn't justify the expense for the number of trains that were operating on the line, that the smash-board would work just fine. This meant that every Deep River Southern train including passenger trains and hot shots that had to traverse the

crossing would be required to stop, call the Frisco Dispatcher on the phone that was located in the Telephone Box (in later years the telephone was removed as communication was done by way of radio communications) and manually unlock the gate. The front-end brakeman, once the train stopped, would get off and get clearance to open the gate. He would then unlock the gate and manually swing it across the Frisco tracks allowing the Deep River Southern train to cross the diamond and once the caboose cleared the train would stop and the rear end brakeman would get off the train, move the gate back across the Deep River Southern and locked in place and contact the Frisco dispatcher letting them know the gate was thrown and track was clear.

That little bit of history was created to justify the smash-board, which does a couple of things for me, it slows down my operations on the layout to extend the run a little, add a little operational interest along the way and to create an obstacle for those switching



Green Valley. I made the gate out of brass wire and just soldered it together based on some prototype pictures that were in the book about the Midland Valley Railroad and then painted it black. I ran it through a piece of brass tubing which slid through a hole I drilled through the homasote and plywood. I also drilled and installed two pieces of code 55 rail which act as stops on either side of the tracks. For years operations consisted of stopping, reaching in using your finger and moving the gate the direction desired, and once your train was clear use your finger and swing it back.

During one of the operation session in which Gert "Speed" Muller was attending he suggested that I install a servo motor under it with a switch on the fascia. I told him, that would be OK, but it works fine the way it is.

The following year Speed again came to operate on my layout, and asked, you haven't motorized it yet? I was like nope, about that time he is looking it over, looking at my bench-work and then asked for a piece of paper and said, "I'm going to build a circuit board for you and a servo motor that will move it the number of degrees needed" then asked me "how long do you want it to take?" I was like, don't want it to zip on over, but don't want the guy to get frustrated waiting for it...so we agreed on about 3-5 seconds. During the fall triennial *Tulsa Line*, Speed approached me and hands me a bag and says, "here is the servo, you get that mounted and the switch on the fascia and the next time I see you I'll bring the circuit card to complete it."

Just prior to this year's LD/OPsig sessions I noticed that Speed once again was coming to operate on my layout, so my friend Bill Gibson from California got pressed into work the day prior to the op session to get the servo motor installed (you have to love deadlines!) After a couple of hours a bracket was constructed and switch mounted to control it. We temporarily moved the motor out of the way so that we could manual operate the gate during the operating sessions.

A little over 2.5 hours into the session when Speed was over, and I noticed he abandoned his train on a siding and is under my layout and has tools in his hand. I told him not to take away from his operating time and that I'd get the gate after they left. We'll that wasn't going to fly for him, so about 15 minutes later there it went, back and forth as the gate smoothly operated from protecting the Frisco tracks or the Deep River Southern tracks. A special thanks to Speed as I honestly would have never animated the gate, but those that have operated on it since just think it is a great addition, as do I, so THANKS!

You can view a YouTube video of the gate in operation at: <https://youtu.be/pKTQlqNJdAo> or <http://bit.ly/1biKubL> **ML**

The Smashboard Circuit by Gert "Speed" Muller

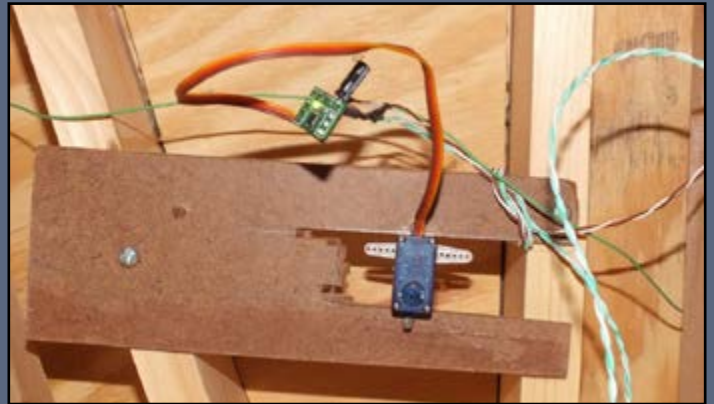
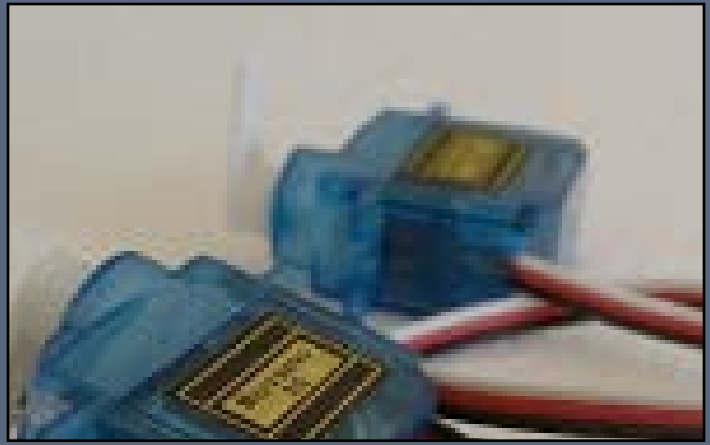
A servo motor, as used in the R/C community (think model cars or airplanes) needs three wires connected, 5V, the Return wire (Ground or Common, as you like) and last the control line. This line carries a pulse from 1 ms to 2 ms in width, sent every 20 ms (50Hz). With a servo that moves from one end to the other, 1.5 ms would send the horn (as they call it) to the center position. (You also get servos that can run continuously forward, fastest at 2 ms, stopped with a 1.5 ms pulse and in reverse, fastest at 1 ms, see <https://www.adafruit.com/products/154>).

So instead of paying high \$'s for an R/C controller, where you can adjust and trim the speed, as well as the start and stop positions of the travel, what is wrong with using a \$0.50 PIC10F200 micro-controller made by Microchip to send out the needed pulses based on a toggle switch telling it which way to go? An LED to tell you you have power, a few pull-up resistors on a small PC board with connectors and a capacitor on the supply line, and then: suddenly you are controlling TWO servo motors with 2 toggle switches using the same 50 cent micro-controller. Of course, a little bit of code needs to go into the chip, but you know someone who thinks that is easy too, don't you? You can also add two LEDs at the toggle switch to show someone else which way the turnout is thrown.

For all my N Scale turnouts, I only need the horn to move 1 mm, so 30 degrees around center with the piano wire in the first hole and, just like in the case of the smash-board, the movement speed is fixed. The smash-board needed a 120 degree swing, so two values changed in the code and mission accomplished.

Now that servo motors can be bought online for less than \$3, you might want to plan your next semaphore or other animation project sooner than you thought. Also see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servo_\(radio_control\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servo_(radio_control)) if you need a better explanation on servo control! Or <http://www.txnamib.com/electronics-and-software/servos> if you'd like to see some oscilloscope graphs of the servo pulses.

ML



The Return of the Colorado and Silver River Empire

Text and photos by Gert "Speed" Muller



Train #102, on the Eagle Route, runs with through freight from Monarch to Glenwood Springs and then return switching all the towns along the way as train #103. Always a good idea, to help new operators, to have them visit every place, all through the layout route, before they get to work. Here, train #102 crosses the bridge over Holly Falls. Yes Sir, that light was green when we went by it! Note the new bridge across the river on the newly

As reported last issue, the Colorado and Silver River, under control of CEO and MMR Chip Romig, expanded its right of way into the mountains with tight curves and narrow gauge track. Finally, after about a year and quite a bit of very hard labor, it is up and running again. No, very few foreigner workers were (ab)used, they are all citizens now, ;). Not all is done yet, but enough to hope for a revenue generating opening day!

This article will take you along the "good old" standard gauge route, through different towns now, since we had some luck negotiating better deals with mayors in different towns! Next trip, you'll see the "new" Narrow Gauge on the DRGW. **ML**



Chip Romig



Engine #32 waiting outside Carbondale at a red signal for the Mine Train to clear the main line. Really, what were they thinking, that whole million dollar siding was built just for them!



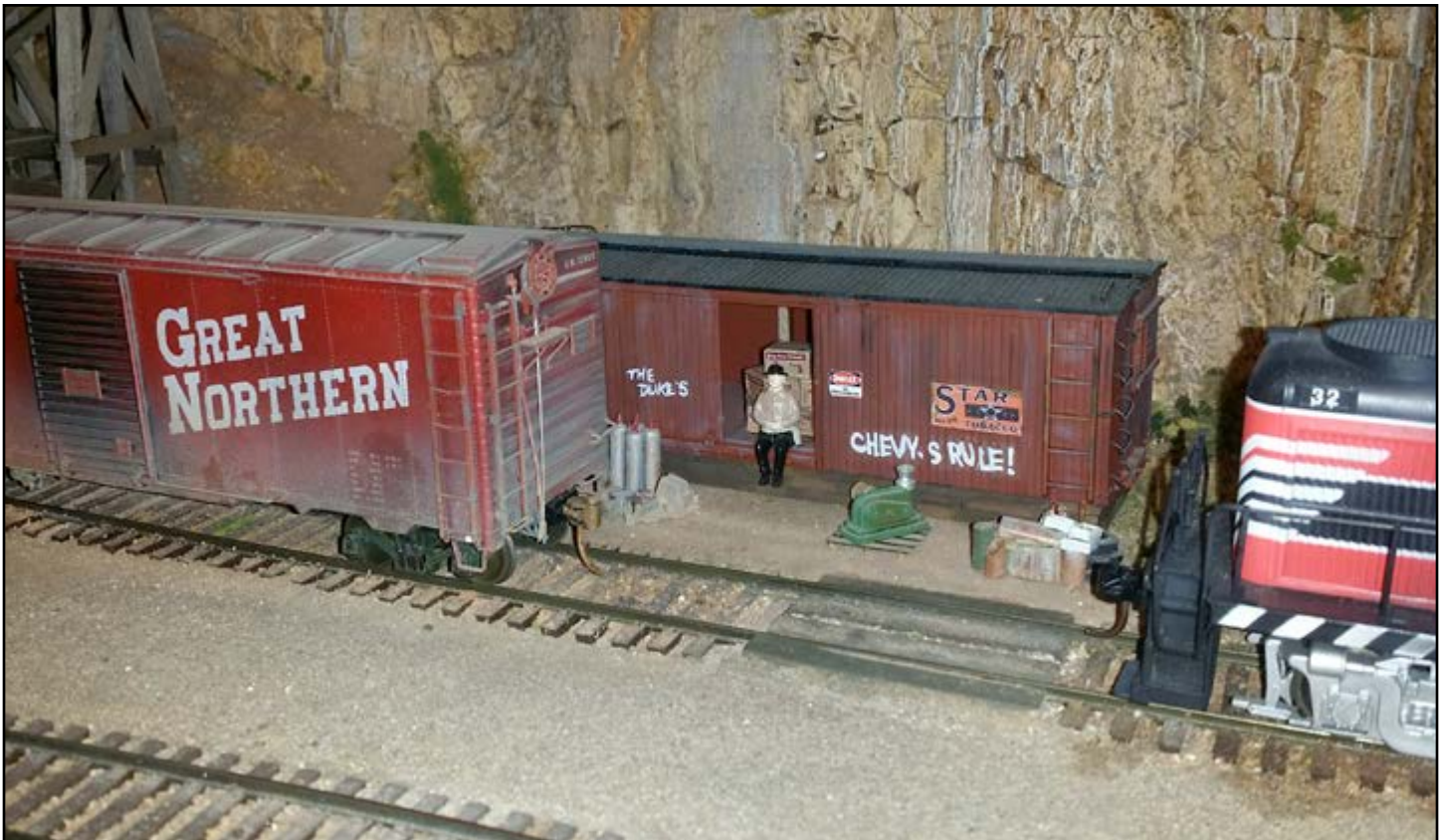
Finally arriving in Glenwood Springs! The yard master will let us in in a few minutes, he is just sipping on the last drop in his coffee flask. See the beautiful trestle in the background on the Narrow Gauge?



While they service engine #32, how 'bout we just sit back and take a break! Hmmm, that crate on the turntable looks like a nice spot.



Always nice when an uncoupler works like intended, activate it while changing direction at the right spot at slow speed and success! The Army in Monarch is getting some fuel, - we don't know the octane though, but at least they are keeping us safe! Of course, leaving Glenwood Springs on the return trip, we are now on train #103.



Spotting a car in Basalt...wish the locals did a little more than just sit around.



Between Craig and Resurrection, we cross the famous Colorado and Silver River bridge. Looking down on the DRGW track in Bond. Oops, slow down, red signal ahead!



A train meet in Resurrection! That must be train #101, my counter part traveling the other way. I think we need to help each other getting work done in this town, or maybe I can just give him the one car I need to spot and get out.



In Leadville, new on the route, we pick up an empty stock car and get to see how the Narrow Gauge use their "midget" cars (just kidding), to visit the same stock yard.



Crossing a gauntlet always raises the hair on the neck of the engineer in #32. He knows that he is not in the center of the bridge - and what if something goes wrong??



Back in Salida, the 2nd last stop, they take almost all our cars from the train. Only one goes on the Monarch where we tie down. Waaau, look at all that coal traffic, don't they know about renewable energy yet?



Then of course there is the dessert during break, well, what do we say about that, did we come to eat or run trains? You don't have to answer!



A final view of the main reason we do this, and I'll quote Larry: "The people, the friendship and the time spent together!"



And what does any good CEO do during an operating session? Clean wheels!!!

PORTLAND DAYLIGHT EXPRESS

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION



August 23 - 29, 2015

**For information and registration
www.nmra2015portland.org/**

Old Yellow Box Kits

Text and photos by Lee Bangma



StromBecker: "Simple for the Beginner, Authentic for the Expert". Strombecker cabooses circa 1940's.

Recently, I found myself in a discussion about different manufacturers and their color of boxes. For example, a common one is the well known Athearn "Blue Box" with its easily assembled car kits. This discussion got me thinking about older kits, especially the ones that came in yellow boxes, so I looked through my personal supply of kits to see what I could find. It's scary, how much stuff you can find in a model railroader's train room; especially under the railroad. And it's amazing how many kits there were, and how long I've carried them around with me, from house to house and state to state, in moves over the years. I decided that maybe I should share some information about them, especially to show some of you younger modelers, (whether by age or by time in the hobby) just how good things are today, compared with years ago. Now you can buy enough things ready made to build a decent railroad, but years ago you had to do most of the work yourself. You can still do that if you choose, and it's a good way to enjoy the hobby, but it's no longer necessary.

This is not meant to be a complete listing by any means. It's just a sample of what I had available and what

I found lurking under my own railroad. I have tried to list them according to the age of the product, at least to the best of my recollection, and am concentrating on train cars. So, let's get started.

The first picture is of a model made by the Strombecker co., probably from sometime in the 1940's, although it could be earlier or later, as they were made over a large time period. Strombecker made kits of trains, but also cars, army and navy equipment, and other things. All were made of wood, card stock, and paper, and were inexpensive and readily available in stores.

They were basic and simple to build, but seemed very popular at the time. Judging by the piece I have, they were oversized for HO scale. This one seems larger than the standard cabooses manufactured today or even in the 1950's by other manufacturers.

Varney had kits typically made of a cast plastic body added to a cast metal frame. They had better details but were still rather crude by today's standards. Some details, such as grab irons, needed to be added separately.



Photo 2 Varney plastic and metal kit

Before the famous Athearn Blue Box, there were the yellow (and orange) boxes originally put out by Athearn and Globe, which was acquired by Athearn, in the 1940's and 1950's. Unfortunately, I have no examples of these, as they went away in preparation for the move from Michigan to Texas last year. But they were originally made from wood overlaid with stamped metal sides, ends, and roofs before they were made from plastic.

Roundhouse (also known as MDC or Model Die Casting) used yellow boxes at one time. The first kits I built were their heavy metal ones, in which you had to file the flashing (edges left from the casting process) off



Photo 3 Roundhouse (MDC) metal cars

of the parts and then screw them together using rivets and/or 256 screws. They had pre-painted sides which were matched with 410M or Floquil paints. The biggest challenge was in filing off the flashings. Because of the metal casting process, they were, indeed, heavy cars, which usually ran on sprung metal trucks with metal wheel sets. Later models (beginning in the 1960's if memory serves me correctly), were made from plastic, although some had metal floors for weight and some had plastic floors and metal weight inserts.

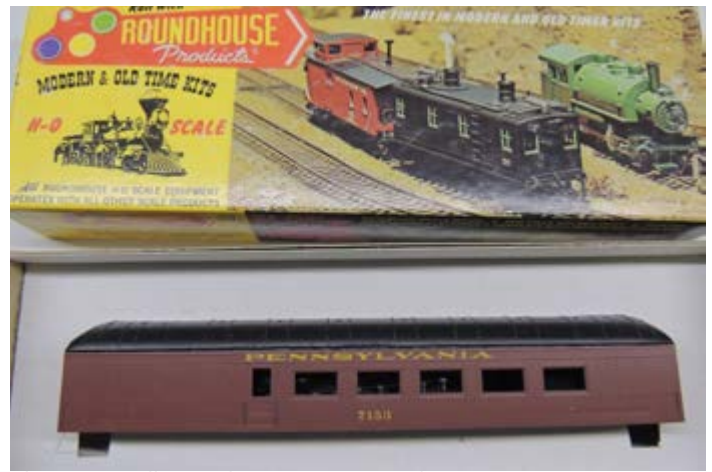


Photo 4 Roundhouse plastic passenger car kit

They also produced a line of commemorative cars, including a set of passenger cars for the United States Bicentennial.



Photo 5 Roundhouse commemorative Bicentennial cars

In the 1960's wooden kits seemed to become more popular. As craftsman kits, they were more challenging to build than the cast metal or plastic kits being produced. A number of companies produced them. Some of them were Laconia, Crestline/ Taylor made, which was made for and marketed by Walthers, and Silver Streak (a division of Tru-scale) which produced a line of wood kits with metal detail castings.



(6) Silver Streak kit (built up)

Ambroid also had similar kits in wood with metal details, including a number of "ONE IN FIVE THOUSAND" limited run kits.

Main Line Models produced an extensive line of kits, also in wood with metal details (7,8). These were also craftsman kits. They produced a number of limited run NMRA regional and Division car kits, to be used as fundraisers. Their normal line came in yellow boxes, although some NMRA kits came in plain card stock boxes with just a mailing label.



(7) Main Line Models reefer

Some yellow boxes held plastic kits, especially as they became more common than the wood kits. Athearn (as stated earlier) had yellow boxes before the blue box became popular, as did Train Miniature, which produced kits in the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's. These were fairly easy kits to assemble, as were most plastic kits of that era.



(8) Main Line Models wood car



(9) Train Miniature Ltd



(10) Train Miniature Ltd

J.M.C. International produced a line of kits. The sample I have closely resembles similar kits produced by Athearn. I wonder if they could have been produced by Athearn for J.M.C. International.

I could find no information about J.M.C. International (13) on the Internet, but their kits used the same



(12) Train Miniatures also had a line of commemorative cars for the bicentennial celebration



(13) J.M.C. International

type of clip to hold the couplers and were of similar construction.

Front Range Products (14) also produced easy to build plastic kits of similar construction.

Kadee (15,16) also produced a number of kits that came in yellow boxes. The ones I have are of logging prototypes. These were probably their most popular car kits, and were constructed from wood and cast metal, with plastic logs as their loads. They made other types of cars; I just don't have any.

While Suydam is best known for their building kits, they also produced a line of detail parts including



(14) Front Range



(15) Kadee Line

those for passenger cars. They also imported a line of brass trolleys and interurbans.

More recently, Red Caboose models (19) produced a line of plastic craftsman kits.



(16) Kadee Line



(18) Suydam brass interurban



(17) Suydam passenger car interior kit



(19) Red Caboose model



(20) E.&B. Valley Railroad Co.



(21) E.&B. Valley Railroad Co.



(22) Puffing Billy Models



(23) Puffing Billy Models



(24) Fine Scale Miniatures



(25) Not yellow. Main Line Lone Star Region kit.

E & B Valley (20,21) produced HO and HO_N3 narrow gauge cars in plastic. Their trucks were unique in that the axles and wheels were not one piece, but had to be built up individually. This was a challenge, and many modelers fit the cars with other brands of trucks to avoid using the kit trucks.

Puffing Billy Models were imported from Australia, and were made in HO_N3 from cast metal. No trucks or couplers were included.

In closing, although not train cars, I had to mention those yellow box wonders put out by George Sellios from Peabody, Mass. known as Fine scale Miniatures. Several have sat on my shelf for years, waiting for the appropriate time to be built.

And, finally, although not in a yellow box, but from a company whose normal (not custom) line came in a yellow box, a kit from 1967 for the Lone Star Region of the NMRA.

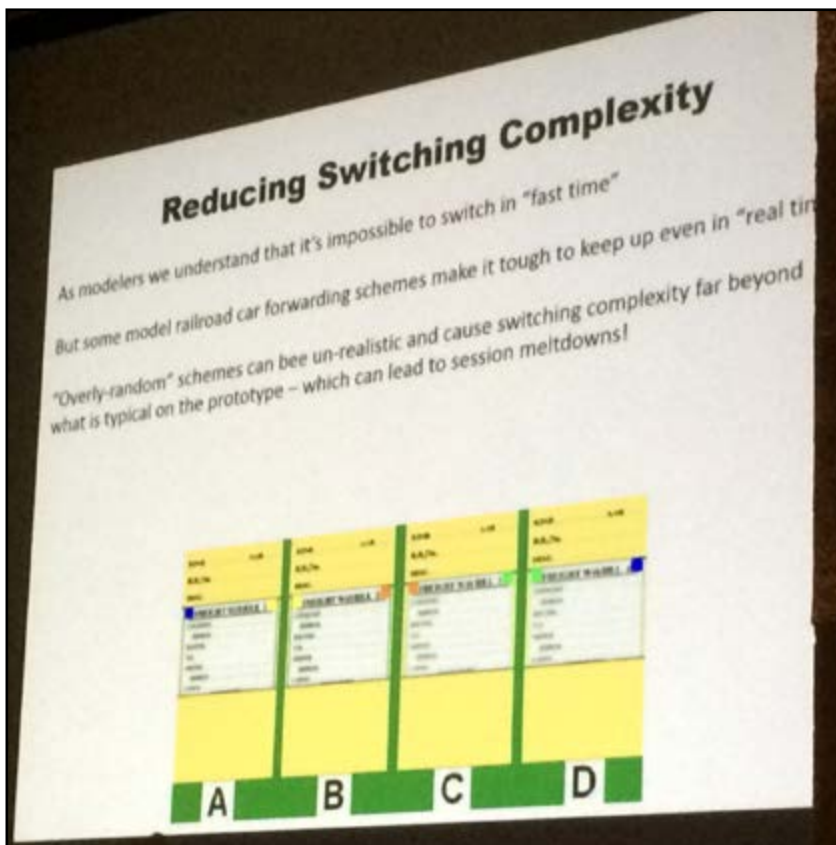
This was designed to be a sampling of yellow box kits; not a complete listing. All photos are of kits currently in my possession. This was written to give an idea of one facet of the hobby and as an introduction to some of the older craftsman kits that were available (and may still be available in some cases).

I hope you enjoyed it! **ML**

Text by Daniel Castillo
Photos by Riley Triggs



Dean Ferris provided great insight into prototypical railroad operations.



Friday night six Op Sessions were scheduled, and then Saturday the formal presentations were

Dean Ferris, a current employee of a Class I railroad, shared his work experience as a Switch-



Dave Salamon's Deep River Yard complex

man, Yardmaster and Trainmaster to get cars moved. He provided suggestions on how to operate a yard utilizing all personnel in and passing through the yard(s). His railroad experience involved a major yard and several satellite yards in the Seattle, Washington, area. These resources worked together to avoid a yard or system melt down.

Dr. Mike Borkon from Kansas City, Missouri, renovated his basement to create the Green River sub of the Union Pacific Railroad during 1956. He explained his research to determine what the UP was moving and how it did it. He located dispatch logs from October, 1956, in a region library, and he was able to locate the retired dispatcher named on one of the logs then interviewed him regarding train movement through Green River.

Mike was able to determine car loads and which foreign railroad products were shipped through Green River. During October 1956, the line moved expedited thirty reefer blocks of produce from California and the Pacific Northwest to the East. Westbound traffic was forwarding merchan-

dise and drag freights. This time period featured the twilight of steam, first generation diesel and turbine power operating under ABS with semaphore control.

The Green River yard serviced locomotives, had a coach yard, east and west classification sections, the west section could hold four hundred cars. This era also had passenger train service from Chicago to Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Each west coast city had its own named train but the City of Los Angeles was an exclusive Union Pacific Railroad train.

The two other city named trains operated under agreements with foreign railroads but featuring Armour Yellow painted equipment. Sheep, cattle, horses, coal, oil and soda ash were local commerce shipped on the Union Pacific.

A local handles freight traffic to and from Granger, Green River, Rock Springs, Wamsutter, Bitter Creek and Rawlins. Dr. Borkon added a narrow gauge railroad which interchanges with the UP at the town of Bitter Creek because it's his layout!



Wrisley Papers on Rich Gibson's Berkshire and Franconia Railroad.



Tom Pearson confidently operates at Fort Smith on Steve Davis' Kansas City Southern 3rd Subdivision



Dave Salamon's Deep River Southern's grain coop.

Traffic is governed by rule 251 for double track and current of traffic. Passenger trains run according to timetable as first class trains and must be kept on time.

All freight traffic runs as extra trains. The dispatcher/operator provides line ups to local trains and messages similar to form 19 orders under timetable/train order direction. Center sidings strategically placed for passenger or clearing first class trains. His railroad couldn't exist without the help and generous commitment of time and talent from his local model railroad community for which he is grateful.

Charlie Duckworth concluded the formal presentations with Resin Kit Construction Techniques.

The operating sessions were scheduled at: Steve Campbell's *Frisco Cherokee Railroad*; Sammy Carlile's *Santa Fe Hereford Subdivision*; Steve Davis' *KCS 3rd Sub*; Ken Ehlers' *Pandora & San Miguel Rail-*

road, Sn3 scale; The *Green Country Model Railroad*; Rich Gibson's *Berkshire and Franconia Railroad*; John Pansius' *Tulsa Junction Railway*; Jim Sinclair's *Southern Pacific Donner Pass Railroad*; and Dave Steensland's *Silverton & Lake City Railroad*, an HOn3 layout based in southwest Colorado; *Claremore & Southern Railroad*; and Dave Salaman's *Deep River Southern Railroad*.

The weekend was put together by: Dave Salaman, Jim Senesse, Tom Frausser, Charlie Tapper, Rich Gibson, Randy Smith, Ken Ehlers, Jim Sinclair, Jon Pansius, Steve Campbell, Dave Steensland, Steve Gillett, Sammy Carlile, Steve Davis, Raymond Brunner, Claremore & Southern, Green Country Model Railroaders and George Miller.

There were a hundred attendees this year. Largest turnout they've ever had. If you are interested in attending this event next year, check their website www.tulsanmra.org for information. **ML**

Operation Christmas Train Set



Part of the Toby Keith OK Kids Korral layout built by Operation Christmas Train Set this year.

Compiled from information provided by Dustin Fisher, founder of Operation Christmas Train Set

Operation Christmas Train Set (OCTS) was born October 15, 2014 out of a combination of a desire to help less fortunate children and their families in our community at Christmas time and a passion for model trains. It started by putting together train sets for children of two single moms who were struggling financially at Christmas time this year.

Due to the overwhelming generosity of our donors, OCTS was able to give away over 75 train sets to needy families in the community that first year. They have set a goal to become a registered not-for-profit organization and give away at least 100 sets and build 2 complete layouts for worthy organizations by Christmas of 2015.

Some of the not-for-profit organizations involved in the effort include: Manna Pantry Yukon, Oklahoma, Yukon Sharing Yukon, Oklahoma, Angel Tree Prison Ministries, Larry Mills SNU Bethany Oklahoma, Reaching Our City Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Melissa Gabriel's Christmas Dinner through Christmas Blessing through Gregory's Heart of Hope Free Christmas Dinner for needy families, and Marine Corps Toys For Tots program OKC.

Other commercial sponsors include the local Oklahoma City Starbuck's stores, Cross Timbers Family Outreach and Ministry, and multiple model railroad clubs and individuals across the United States as well as local businesses in our community.



OCTS is expanding by conducting various toy and clothing drives across the Oklahoma City metro area to benefit these organizations listed and the families they represent. They are also involved in the state of Maryland through the representation of Mr. Mike Greene and through the sponsorship of Seaside Hobbies and other organizations and donors in their local area. Contributors include Mike Millitello of Making Tracks and Jason Hill of Hobby Depot as well as Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.

Upcoming projects for this year at OCTS include a wooden toy train layout and play table for the Alfred I. duPont Children's Hospital in Wilmington, DE, toy drives with Toys for Tots Oklahoma City, Gregory's Heart of Hope Oklahoma City, Oklahoma DHS, Yukon Manna Pantry Yukon, Angel Tree Prison Ministries Bethany, OK, Foster Care Families of Oklahoma, a full HO scale train layout for the Bill Weaver Daily Living Centers of Oklahoma City, 3 mobile 4 x 4 mini layouts for the wings in the OU Children's hospital clinics on behalf of the Cavett Kids Foundation.

Already completed this year is a mobile 4 x4 mini layout for the Toby Keith Foundation OK Kids Korral.

The Marker Lamp

OCTS accepts donations of any scale new and used engines, freight cars, passenger cars, cabooses, track, power packs, terminal power track, Hot Wheels cars, and buildings to put in the train sets for kids. We accept HO scale buildings, scenery items, full trains, track, and scenery materials for the layouts we build. In addition to the train sets, the group is also collecting warm coats, hats, gloves, etc.

Anything you can contribute or provide assistance to needy families this Christmas and in future years to come would be greatly appreciated and gladly accepted. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Dustin Fisher Founder of Operation Christmas Train Set:

Email: operationchristmastrainset@yahoo.com

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/operationchristmastrainset>

Phone: (405) 519-3716 **ML**

The Who's Who of Sound Decoders

Text and photos by Blake Bogs



While talking to several modelers at a train show a few months ago, I asked them about sound. I asked what kind of sound they have in their locomotives. Most said they had Tsunamis and QSI sound decoders in their locomotives. When I asked if they had ever installed a decoder in their locomotives, most said, "no." Those who said "yes" said they had installed only Tsunami decoders.

This article is meant as a guide to anyone wanting sound in their locomotives. I will be giving a ranking to each decoder, and list each decoder price and part numbers. I also will cover the warranty and customer service of each of the following: Soundtraxx Tsunami Decoder, MRC Sound, ESU's Lok Sound, TCS Wow Sound, QSI Sound, Digitrax Sound Decoders, and Phoenix Sound. In addition, I will review Broadway Limited Paragon 2 decoders.

The first decoder I will cover is Soundtraxx's Tsunami Decoders. Tsunami Decoders come in all

sizes and varieties. Tsunami offers Steam and Diesel Decoders. They offer Light, Medium, Heavy, K Series, and C Series Steam Sound decoder. They also offer EMD, Alco, GE, and Fairbanks Morris diesel decoders. These are all available as the TSU-1000, TSU-750, and other drop in decoders.



Tsunami drop-in decoder

The Tsunami TSU-1000 measures 1.68" x 0.68" x 0.25" and lists retail for \$119.00. This decoder can be used in any locomotive and generally fits in any locomotives within reason. They however cannot generally be used in any locomotives smaller than HO. The Tsunami TSU-750 Decoder measures 1" x .51" x .21" and list for \$139.95. This decoder can

generally be used in anything bigger than N scale. Although, several N scalers I know have used these decoders and put them in a N scale boxcar or another car behind the locomotive. Tsunami also offers a drop in boards to be put in specific locomotives.

Tsunami Decoders are great decoders and they come with a 1 year warranty. If you buy a 567 Diesel decoder, you can't use it for a 567 non-turbo locomotive. It will not change sound. Another disadvantage to Tsunami, is that everyone uses factory Tsunami in their locomotives. Although, Intermountain, MTH, and Broadway limited use different sounds, Athearn and Walthers use these decoders exclusively in their engines.

This is nice because Tsunami produces a great sound decoder, but in my opinion bad because every engine you have will sound alike. Tsunami has a great customer service and will answer any question you have. If they don't know it, they will research it and call you back. I give them a B. The reason I give them a B is because their sound can't be changed.

The next decoder I will cover is MRC Sound Decoders. In my opinion, MRC is very poor. Their motor decoders work well, but the sound they produce is very crude. I have a MRC decoder in my ALCO PA, and it does not sound like an Alco; it sounds more like an EMD locomotive. I also had a steam decoder in my Big Boy.



MRC decoder installation (blue under speaker at right)

The whistle is great, but the chuff is poor. I would not use any MRC decoders in my new locomotives, and when money allows, I plan to replace the MRC sound decoders I already have. Talking to several people, I have heard that they reworked their whole decoder line and sounds, but I have not tried the new line. I am very skeptical about their new decoders. If anyone has tried them, please let me know. MRC offers a generic steam and diesel decoder. They also offer specific Alco and EMD sounds.

MRC measure 1.16" x .69" x .2" and offer drop in decoders in HO and N scale. They retail for \$72.98. MRC also offers drop in boards that replace the OEM boards. They offer a one year warranty. I give this

decoder a D.

LokSound is one of the newer decoders I have found.

LokSound is produced in Europe and shipped to the United States, although they have an office in the U.S. where they offer support



LokSound

for their products. They are constantly upgrading the sound they have with new locomotive recordings.

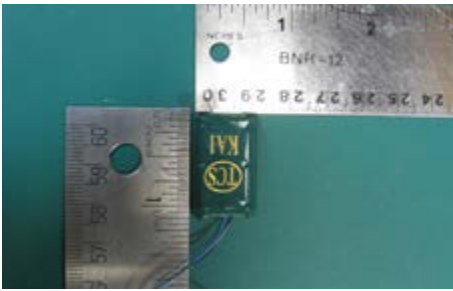
LokSound offers the V4.0 Decoder and the Select Decoder. The select decoder is a decoder that can be loaded with any locomotive sound offered by LokSound on their website. The Select decoder can be loaded with EMD Diesels, Alco Diesel, and many other diesels. The dealer you buy the decoder from can program for you usually for \$5.00, or you can buy the programmer for the decoder from LokSound. If you cannot find anyone to program the decoders, ask me!

LokSound also offers the V4.0 Decoder. This decoder allows you to make your own sound to put on the decoder with LokSound's software, you can download your own recording for a specific locomotive. You also have the ability to load older sound files of LokSound's website that are not offered as a sound file for the Select decoder.

Regular LokSound 4.0 and Select decoder's measure 1.18" x 0.59". They retail for \$100.00. LokSound once offered a speaker with every decoder, but as of January 1st, they no longer offer a speaker due to cost.

LokSound also offers the micro decoder. This decoder measures in 0.98" x .41" and will fit inside of a N scale or HO N3 engine easily. This decoder also retails for \$100.00. They also offer a drop in board which will fit in almost any HO locomotive. I am a fan of LokSound! It took a while to figure out all the features of LokSound decoders, and I am still learning about them.

The LokSound decoders come with a 1 year warranty, and customer service is good, but is hard to get a hold of. They are only open two days a week and have called several times during those days with no answer. I give this Decoder a B+.

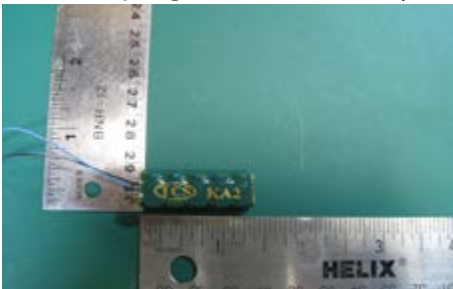


TCS KA1

The next decoder I will review is the TCS WOW sound. This decoder is the newest sound decoder on the market. WOW sound offers mul-

multiple diesel engines on a single decoder. This means on one decoder you have the option to choose light steam, medium steam, and heavy steam. Or on the EMD decoder you have the option to choose the 567 non turbo or turbo, the 645 motor, or the 710 motor. Multiple horns or whistles are found on each decoder, and the steam decoder has over 20 whistles. I use WOW steam almost exclusively - the decoder is that good.

The decoder also features audio assist menu to program. This allows you to program your function details, your chuff rate, and also the type of locomotive you want without having to find the CV number. This decoder



TCS KA2

is one of the most advanced decoders available. TCS has made this decoder to make modelers' lives easier.

The regular WOW sound decoder measures 1.35" x .66" x 0.22" and comes with or without a keep alive decoder. The decoder retails for \$94.95 without the keep alive and for \$109.95 with the KA option. There are other decoder sizes available. This decoder is one of my favorites because it is the easiest decoder on the market. TCS also features the one year, goof proof guarantee. If you burn it out for



TCS WOW Sound

any reason, you can send it out. TCS has a great customer service, and I love talking to them. They will walk you through any problem and if

they can't figure it out, send it back and they will help you. I give the TCS decoder an A+ overall.

I have not used QSI decoders very often, but

I love the sound they offer. The decoder was used by Walthers for years in their locomotives, until they switched over to Tsunami Sound. QSI was bought out during 2014. Unfortunately, I have never installed a QSI sound decoder. I am basing this rating based on the Walters locomotives.

QSI Sound is some of the most realistic sound I have ever heard. Their sound was recorded from the prototype locomotives, and the result is fantastic. QSI has steam and diesel sounds. They have Alco, EMD, Turbine, and other sounds. QSI offers 2 types of steam locomotives.

The basic decoder from QSI is the Titan U/W. This decoder measures 1.77" x .67" x .26" and the retail price is \$139.95. QSI decoders come with a 90 day warranty. After this, you are able to return for repair, but you will have to pay for this repair. While researching this article, I was confused on how to download sound to their decoder. I found out that you must use their programmer to program it and another free program off the Internet to program the CVs. I tried talking to their customer service, and they never called me back. I ended up finding out my info for this decoder through Jim at KMJ model Trains.

Since I am pleased with this decoder, I give this decoder a B- rating. I give it a B- rating because of the difficulty on finding information, the difficulty in programing, and their suspect customer service.

Digitrax Sound is a decoder I am very not pleased with. When I heard Digitrax was coming out with a decoder, I was excited to hear they were. I have always liked Digitrax decoders. I was extremely let down when I heard the decoder for the first time. I never bought a Digitrax sound decoder, but instead my dad installed a sound decoder in a steam locomotive. I was not impressed when I heard, and would not buy it unless that was the only option. Digitrax offers an 8 bit and 16 bit decoder. The



TCS WOW install

decoder offers 8 different locomotive selections. A speaker is provided with the decoder.

The decoder measures 1.28" x 0.67" x 0.25" and retails for \$75.00. The decoder comes with a one year no worry warranty. Digitrax has an okay customer service. I don't talk to them often so I can't give a rating to their customer service. If I have a Digitrax question, I usually just ask my friend who use to work for Digitrax. My ranking on the decoder is a D-. I would recommend you buy the WOW sound, Tsunami, or LokSound before you buy this decoder.

Another sound system is Phoenix sound, and it is more likely used for large scale or On3, but with the new decoder that Phoenix has recently released, I feel they are partially now in the HO market. The new decoder is small enough if you have a big steam locomotive with a huge tender, it will fit in the tender. But please note, Phoenix Sound does NOT feature a motor decoder. It is strictly a sound system, but you can use the sound with DCC.

The nice thing about phoenix sound is their boards can be programed like LokSound. I like Phoenix because I grew up with Phoenix sound. I have heard Phoenix in G scale locomotives for years. Their sound is very close to the real thing, although they reuse sound in multiple locomotives. Phoenix sound measures 1.65" x 0.63" x 0.51" and retails for an estimated \$140.00. In my opinion, I give Phoenix Sound a B- because of the size and the lack of a motor decoder.

Finally, I wanted to review two brands that come with their own sound system. I first want to review Broadway Limited Paragon 2. You are not able to buy Paragon 2 sound as an after market product. You are only able to buy it with the locomotive you purchase from BLI.

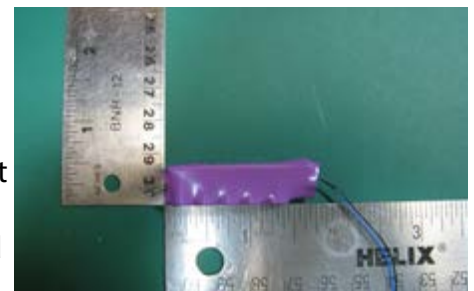
I personally love BLI locomotives and sound, but the main thing I don't like about Broadway Limited is the fact that they reuse their chuffs and sometimes reuse their whistles in multiple locomotives. Although this is a downside to the decoder, that is the only problem I have experienced. Their sound decoders are amazing and produce very prototypical sounds. They have farm, industry, and other cool noises. Broadway locomotives vary in price, and I give their decoders an A.

The other brand I want to review is Mike's Train House (MTH) Proto 3 Sound. I have only had

one MTH locomotive and sold it within a month. Proto 3 sound is supposedly a triple action decoder running on DC, DCC, and DCS. When I ran the locomotive, it ran okay, but I had extreme difficulties getting certain sound functions to work. I would read the manual, do exactly as it said to do, and it still would not work. I was pleased with the sound, but I sold it because of the problems with the functions. I asked my local hobby shop about this problem. I was told that If you have DCS, you will be fine. But without DCS, not all the functions will work. Due to this problem, I would give this decoder a D-.

In addition to this decoder review, I would also like to point out that many companies are coming out with devices to keep locomotives running while enduring dirty track or hitting dead spots in track.

TCS has come out with their Keep Alive devices and Soundtraxx has come out with



TCS WOW Sound

the current keeper. As you can see from the photos, they are about 1" to an 1.5" in length. I have done limited testing and what I have seen I really like these devices. If you buy a TCS WOW sound, you can buy the decoder with a keep alive device. I would invest in either a keep alive or current keeper and test in a locomotive on your layout.

I would also like to point out some accessories to make your layout and model railroading experience better. There are three final accessories that I recommend buying for your layout. I first recommend the ESU Decoder Tester. This tester gives you the ability to test any make and model decoder with your DCC system.

I also recommend buying Broadway Limited's decoder programmer. This decoder programmer is one of the easiest devices I have every used. I was very hesitant to buy one, but BUY IT!!! It is one of the best programmers I have. It is the easiest programmer to use because you enter the decoder or put the locomotive on the track hooked to the programmer, press the locomotive number in, and then press enter. It will instantly program it. It will also let you know what engine number the locomotive is by pressing the read button.



ESU LokSound installation

One last accessory I recommend you buy is the Sprog DCC unit. The Sprog allows you to use your computer as a programmer for your decoder. This

will allow you to set sound levels, bells, whistles and other accessories on your sound decoder. It also will allow you to change your speed table on any sound or motor decoder. All you need is the JMRI/Decoder Pro Software which is absolutely free. These three items allow model railroading and decoders to be the best it can be.

In conclusion, all these decoder ratings are my opinion, and you should take my advice with a grain of salt, but I feel like my ranking of these decoders is fair. Everyone has their own opinion about sound decoders.

I have two favorite decoders now. They are TCS WOW Sound and the ESU LokSound. In my opinion, they are the sound of the future, plus they are constantly upgrading their decoders. TCS WOW sound is the best steam sound decoder, and it is a tie between TCS WOW Sound and ESU LokSound for best diesel sound.

If a modeler asks me right now which decoder to buy, I would point him to TCS WOW Sound because of the ease of using it. LokSound can be very confusing to use, but once you use them, they

become easier to use.

I have compiled a video about Tsunami, WOW Sound, ESU LokSound, MRC, QSI and Broadway Limited Decoders



Tsunami drop in installation

which will allow you to hear each decoder before you buy it. MTH and Digitrax are not in this review because I do not own and MTH engines or Digitrax Sound Decoders.

In a future issue, I will cover basic decoder CV's. CV's can be very confusing, so I have compiled all the necessary CV'S to allow your engines to run as smoothly as possible and have neat accessory functions like ditch lights. I hope this article has helped you understand sound decoders better and help you narrow down your choices. If you have any questions (or want to run for office), please email superchief1520@gmail.com or call me at (713)254-7447. I will be happy to answer any and all questions. **ML**

Bonus video of the [Wimberley, Blanco & Southern Trip- NMRA Lone Star Region Convention 2014](#) on YouTube.

Summary: Rating of all the Decoders

Type of Decoder	Ability to Change Locomotive	Regular Decoder Retail Price	Micro Decoder Retail Price	Drop In Decoder Retail Price	Overall Rating
Tsunami	No	\$119.00	\$139.95	\$99.95	B
MRC	No	\$74.98	N/A	\$109.98	D
<u>LokSound</u>	Yes	\$99.95	\$99.95	\$109.99	B+
TCS WOW	Yes	\$94.95	N/A	N/A	A+
QSI	Yes	\$103.95	N/A	\$103.95	B-
Phoenix	Yes	\$265.00	\$140.00	N/A	B-

Round Town with Roy

Text and images by Roy Stockard



WSLC Saw Mill

Early morning operations begin with Engine #12 just leaving camp with a string of empties, while Engine #15 rounds the curve at the top of the hill in the upper right.

Modeling is done by Bob Lydecker on his Sn3 West Side Lumber Company style logging layout. Photography by Roy Stockard



Union Station is Busy

This scene depicts the transition era as arrivals from all points converge on the station. A Santa Fe streamliner awaits departure as what seems to be the finish of a race between the past and the future arrives from the opposite route. One last time, Santa Fe 4 8 4, #3751 pulling heavy weight Pullmans, seems to have beaten out the Chicago streamliner wearing war bonnet colors. On the junction track, a quartet of blue and yellow Santa Fe freight engines awaits the Denver and Rio Grande which has just departed.

This HO scene, mostly modeled by member, Bob Brand, is part of the South Side Railroad Modelers club. It is housed in the old Sears distribution center (depicted as the red and white building center left top) just south of downtown Dallas. Photography by Roy Stockard

ANNOUNCING!!

THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF THE

SQUARE FOOT CONTEST

The 2015 SQUARE FOOT Contest

For 2015, the LSR Model Contest is bringing back one of the most popular Special Contests of the past few years – the Square Foot contest. If you're not familiar with it, here's the deal: Build anything you want in any scale you want... as long as it fits on a 12 inch x 12 inch display. It doesn't matter what it is: on-line or off-line; structure, bridge or whatever – the sky's the limit. Actually, the sky literally is the limit; you can go as tall as you want, just don't let it get outside that square foot!

Your Square Foot entry will be judged in the Display contest category and will be eligible for all the traditional awards up to and including Best in Show. And the entry earning the highest score will receive a plaque as Square Foot Contest winner!

But wait, there's more! If you choose to feature an outhouse in your entry it'll also be eligible for the Square Foot contest at the National Narrow Gauge Convention to be held in Houston, September 2-5, 2015. All the same rules apply as for the LSR's version, except that the primary subject is to be an outhouse.

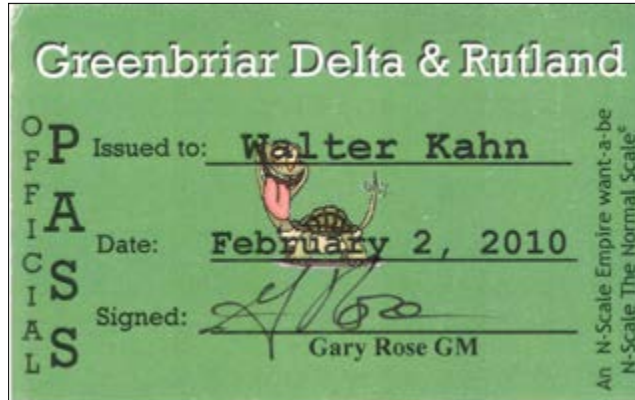
So put on your brainstorming cap, let your imagination go and start thinking INside the box! This contest'll be fun!

If you have any questions, contact the LSR Contest co-chairs:

Chuck Lind
979-219-3305
chucklind46@gmail.com

Loren Neufeld
713-962-4035
lorenmr@aol.com

Pass Exchange



This quarter's pass is from Gary Rose of 378 Taylor Ford Rd, Columbia, KY 42728. Printed on quality card stock with an interesting turtle logo for his *Greenbriar Delta & Rutland*.

Pass Exchange

Headed by Walter Zahn

The Pass Exchange Program is yet another fun way to connect to other model railroaders through printed ephemera you have created. Railroad passes were distributed by railroads to their employees, associates and partners as well as employees of other railroads for courtesy travel on their system. Many modelers recreate this tradition by printing and distributing passes for their own railways as a way to extend and share their modeling efforts.

Here's how it works

Walter Zahn continues to spearhead the Pass Exchange Program for the LSR. To participate in the program, send Walter two of your passes, and in return you will receive a pass and a list of active pass exchangers. Walter will review the passes he receives and share one in each issue of *ML*.

Send passes and any questions or inquiries to:

Walter Zahn
3309 Point East Drive
Mesquite, Texas 75150-2645

Achievement Program



Achievement Program Update

by Duane Richardson, MMR

In talking with National I have confirmed that he processes our submissions on the 28th of each month. If you can get your paperwork to me before then I can get it processed and sent. I was also informed that a PDF scan of the paperwork is acceptable. This is how I have been working with it and it's worked great. This allows me to take submissions almost up to the deadline and still get the paperwork in on time.

If your paperwork is submitted to National prior to the 28th it will get processed on that months list and you will have your certificate returned in just a few weeks. If we miss the 28th then you will be waiting for another month. I will still take your paperwork via regular mail or hand delivered but a PDF is just fine.

Also, as a reminder, there are 2 forms involved in each category. The Statement of Qualification form (or SoQ) and the Record and Validation. The Record and Validation is really only for you to track that you have completed the requirements. The SoQ is the only form I need to submit to National.

Al always said, "Put the pencil to the paper" and get me your paperwork. If you have any questions or if I can help you in any way please feel free to contact me. My contact information is listed with the officers here in the Marker Lamp and on our website. **ML**

For more information on how to get involved in the Achievement Program, contact:

DUANE RICHARDSON, MMR
1122 Holland Drive, Garland, TX 75040
(972) 495-6375
duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

Division 3 Achievement Program Award Winners (and some show and tell) *photos and text by Ken Towery*

Both the February and March Division 3 meetings were held at the Christ the Servant Lutheran Church in Allen, TX. Because the February meeting was the first division gathering after the January Plano Train Show, many new members were welcomed, and the topic of the meeting was Railroading 101. As well, it was a cause for celebration due to Larry Swigert's "seventy-something" birthday. (And we wish him many, many more similar celebrations.) **ML**



Welcome aboard new members!



Jerry Hoverson wishes a happy (belated) birthday to Larry Swigert.



Larry Swigert can have his cake and eat it, too.



In return of the "surprise" birthday announcement to Larry from Jerry Hoverson, Larry returned the surprise with a gift to Jerry.



Allan Price showed off his scratchbuilding skills with this 1/24th-scale flatcar and his Lego train.



Woody Woodgate discusses his "train that doesn't run", and asks for assistance from the division. We wonder, did he ever get it to work?



Diane Caudle discusses her "hurt" structure. She, too, was asking for help. And advice from the gallery commenced.



Jerry displays a scratchbuilt trestle built by George Fogg; the trestle was donated to Division 3.



Roy Stockard took on the task of scratchbuilding a single HOn3 track crossing a double HO (standard gauge) mainline track that (hopefully) will eventually find a home on Jerry Hoverson's new (under construction) layout. This is the first meeting where Roy has displayed his progress.



Larry gives Roy a few pointers on what to do (or what not to do)?

March

March's meeting started off with recognition of Larry Swigert being named National Chairman for Membership, Recruitment, and Retention. A very prestigious honor, and one that is very well deserved considering the hard work and success that Larry's contributed to growing Division 3 membership to the largest it's ever been, and setting an example for all other NMRA divisions to emulate. And two Division 3 members completed all requirements to receive an AP award.



Larry Swigert new national membership chairman



Donna Orr receives her AP certificate for "Author".



Gert "Speed" Muller receives his AP certificate for "Volunteer".



Alex Morrow shows off his model of a Woodlands Scenics gas station...



... and a scratchbuilt HO scale turntable.



Young Eric shows off a great diorama he built. Both Eric and Alex prove that model railroading is truly for all ages.



Lee Bangma displays several freight cars that he scratchbuilt some time ago. And they still operate just like new!



Charles shows off a pre-built commercial turnout that he modified.



Roy Stockard continues his saga of the scratchbuilt HO scale crossover of two HO standard gauge tracks.



Diane Caudle asks for advice on what she calls her "repair project".

Director Reports



Cowcatcher Division 1

by Chris Atkins

chris@railroadermodelers.com

214.222.1285

cowcatcherdivision.com



Don Winn running train on Sammy Carlie's Panhandle Division AT&SF. Dean Ferris and Sammy Carlie in background

I hope you all have made plans to attend the Beaumont convention this summer: July 22-25. It's always nice to visit new places, and Beaumont has never hosted an LSR convention, so it will be fun for everyone. Take a look at the website and see the latest news: <http://lsr2015.com/>

Besides all the great clinics, open houses, operating sessions, model contest, silent auction and other standard activities, the Beaumont/Port Arthur area has a lot of attractions that you may know of.

Undoubtedly, the greatest American Inventor was Thomas Edison. The Edison Museum in Beaumont has over 60 historical Edison artifacts. It's a real treasure, and you don't have to travel to New Jersey to experience it. There's also a steam boat museum, a fire museum, and a dutch windmill museum. The whole Texas Oil industry got its start in Beaumont at Spindle Top, and there are several museums and interpretive sites nearby to commemorate that, like the Texas Energy Museum. There are also a number of historic homes that are open for tours.

The Port of Beaumont is a significant sea port and is not only a huge petroleum industry port, but the Department of Defense deploys entire armies out of Beaumont. All of those armored vehicles and equipment are shipped by rail.

It's also a short drive to the casinos, it that is your thing. Personally, I'm looking forward to the convention itself, and all the great activities that are planned.

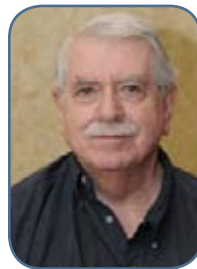
Speaking of travel, a lot of folks from Division 1 made it back to the LDSIG/OPSIG meet in Tulsa in March. One of the featured speakers was Division 1 member Dean Ferris. Dean works for BNSF, and used his work experience as a

yard master to explain how yards work on the prototype. This was great information for planning a new layout as well as building skills to operate yards in a more prototypical manner.

Like most of these events, there were operating sessions on the best local layouts. Tulsa is blessed to have at least a dozen world class layouts and attending this meet is always fun and informative.

On my own layout, I have done a lot of demolition since the division was over in January. We had two chimneys removed and eliminated two large restrooms, opening up a long straight run along the back wall for the length of the building. Matt Latham was a big help in getting this work done.

I built a new wall and with the help of several division members like Wayne Snyder and Pat Wilkinson I have got a good start on the valence at the time I write this. I hope to have the top deck up on one peninsula by the time this is



Bayou Division 2

by Rod Fredericks

fredericks.rod@gmail.com

225-939-0187

So spring is here, and as I write this, the weather is worse than winter. Rain every day, and its only getting hotter here in Baton Rouge. But what's new. There is always the weather to blame when all I want to do is stay in the train room and keep on modeling.

Operations continue to be a major focus in the Baton Rouge/Houma/New Orleans and in Lake Charles Area. And for a second year a coordinated observance of Model Railroad Month has been made. Working with Art Houston (LSR Director at Large) and other clubs and model railroaders we were able to organize area wide activities last November and into December for Model Railroad Month. This included operating sessions and open houses at several clubs and a number of home layouts. The attendance was again very encouraging.

Last month the Mid-South Model Railroad Club, along with the Crescent City Model Railroad Club and Art Houston, hosted Rail Run Louisiana. During this meet modelers and operators from neighboring states operated for three days on the Mid-South, Crescent City and Art's layout in Houma, LA, had an evening of dining on Louisiana Seafood, fellowship and visits to home layouts.

In January I attended the Board of Directors meeting in Beaumont, TX where plans were discussed for this summer's LSR convention. It looks like things are shaping up well, and I am looking forward to a very enjoyable time in July. Look to the website for the details, <http://lsr2015.com/>. Incidentally, although the clinic plans are not entirely finalized at this time (April 15th) I will be most likely be presenting two clinics; one on layout and locomotive wiring

for DCC, and another on tree making. Strange mix, but various skills is what makes model railroading such an interesting hobby.

Along the same line, I and a few friends are in the final planning stages for a series of Saturday morning, informal clinics on various modeling topics. DCC and tree making of course, but extending to other model railroading topics if the interest is there. Anyone interested in attending, either as presenters or learners, please contact me at fredericks.rod@gmail.com to get on the communication list.

On a personal note, work continues on my home layout. All of the track work is operating on the upper level, a large area of scenery with some 600 trees, and many structures including a massive metals mill (Banta's Rico Mill) and a scratch built stone engine house. Maybe by Christmas I might even be ready for an operating session!

So that's all for now. Happy model railroading.



North East Texas Division 3

by Jerry Hoverson, MMR

jhoverson@tx.rr.com

972.540.5315

Spring is here and I'm soooo glad. Really got tired of the cold and have traded it for rain. Oh well, we need the rain.

Since the Plano show was in January, (A big Texas welcome to our new members!) the Trinity River Division monthly meetings have been concentrating on "Model Railroading 101" for all the new members. It took the last 3 meetings to (hopefully) answer everyone's questions. In fact the last meeting we split up and had multiple discussions going on at the same time.

I held a discussion on Scenery and would like to give a special THANK YOU to the other presenters:



Hand car shed project

Locomotives and Rolling Stock – Larry Swigert

DCC – Leonard Siemantel

Lionel – Craig Tribuzi

N-Scale – Gert Muller

Frog Juicer – Allan Gartner

In April we're starting another scratch building project. This time we are going to split the group up into "Beginner", "Intermediate", "Advanced", and "Pycho" as far as scratch building skills are concerned and all build small handcar sheds in both wood and styrene. How complex and detailed depends on the skill level. Should be a fun project!



Layout progress

As I've mentioned in this article before, I've moved and have started a whole new layout. Both the standard gauge and the narrow gauge staging yards are in and running so we're starting to add the rest of the track work.

The GOAL is to have the layout operational for the DFW Interchange in October, keep your finger's crossed!

Lot's more to come so "Keep rolling down the tracks" and we'll see you next time!



CenTex Division 4

by Peter Kazmir

pakazmir@gmail.com

CenTexNMRA.org

We held our first division meeting of the year on March 7 at the Round Rock Library. Kennedy Gauger gave a great clinic about using digital cutters to make paint masks and cut styrene. In addition, we had some great Show and Tell items (did you know that most of the brick buildings in Austin don't use red brick?). Phil Sharpnack delivered our DCC Minute and we had our usual social time and Deal or Duds. Riley Triggs gave a short presentation on his new layout, the *Hoboken Shore Railroad*, which features wireless DCC throttles and battery powered locomotives (the layout has ZERO wiring!), and after the meeting we headed over to Riley's to tour the layout.

Pictures from the meeting and layout tour are online at <http://centexnmra.org/meetings/2015-03.html>

David Barrow, Pete Guy, Jack Merkel, and others have all hosted operating sessions during the past few months as well.



Phil Sharpnack with a DCC minute



Battery-powered 44 tonner on Riley Triggs' Port of New York Railroad

In other news, plans are moving forward for the next iteration of the Austin Model Railroad Jamboree, which will be held in the spring of 2016. In addition, the division is planning to host an all-day meet in the fall (this year). More details will be in the next Marker Lamp, but we invite model railroaders from all over the region to come and have fun with us!

Our next division meeting will be on May 9 starting at 10:00 am at the Round Rock Library. Dick Sowash will be giving a clinic about building plaster structures. We will also have our Show and Tell Table, social time, and Deal or Duds. After the meeting we will be touring – and operating! – David Nicastro's excellent Denver & Rio Grande Western Moffat Route.

The library is located at 216 E. Main St. in Round Rock. On I-35, exit at RR 620 (Exit 252B) and proceed East on RR 620 for a few blocks to the intersection with Main St. and continue East on Main St. for another block and half to the library on the left. A map and more information about the meeting can be found at <http://centexnmra.org/meeting-notice.html>.



Division 5

by Dave Lamberts

DavidWL1944@aol.com

806.792.7244

We displayed our modules at the Mahon Library and had an attendance of 459 people. We always keep a supply of our “business” cards handy as these setups have been a good way to attract new members. We also set up the N scale modules at the Groves library has had about 675 visitors. Wow!

B.J. D’Orsay relates a cute story at the Groves set up. In his words: “The best moment was when a small girl came in with her Grandfather. I spoke my usual admonition, ‘Look all you want but please don’t touch anything.’ That cute little turned to me and said, ‘Well, I know That, I am four after all.’”

One of our members (Jay Morrow) brought up an interesting idea for a get together. He suggested that, using our local hobby shop as the venue, we invite all the other modeling clubs in Lubbock to bring their wares and all set up in that building. I know there is a doll house club in town, and a military modelers club, and some others I do know about. I thought this a good idea. I will write further if it comes to fruition.



Division 6

by Kevin Bergeman

kevin.bergeman@gmail.com

210.488.4370

The South Texas Division Spring Meet was held March 28 in San Antonio; there were 26 people who attended, including 3 guests and folks coming in from Corpus Christi and Kyle. Kennedy Gauger gave us an encore of his Paint Mask clinic and Frank Houzvicka gave us a preview of his “Other German Model Railroads” presentation. During “show & tell” Al Boos had some interesting cast metal vehicles to talk about. Many of the participants then went over to SAMRA to operate on the San Antonio & Northern.

On April 11 - 12, the New Braunfels Railroad Museum held their 27th Annual Train Show Jamboree. I personally spent most of my time with the SANTRAK T-Trak layout, but I did manage to take a spin around the show and see who else was exhibiting. Aust-N-Trak had both N-Trak and T-Trak layouts up and running. The guys from the Gulf Western Modular Railroad Society came in from Corpus with their HO modular layout. The Tinsplate Trackers of Austin had a large layout. There were 2 LEGO® layouts being exhibited, I believe by both the Austin and San Antonio chapters of TEXLUG. Nathan Oxhandler was there as an

individual running several loops of G gauge trains.

By the time this is published AMTRAK Train Day 2015 will be over, San Antonio Railroad Heritage Museum is hosting it May 9th at the San Antonio AMTRAK Station. If the usual suspects show up, there will be SANTRAK, TEXLUG-SA, NBHRM, and of course the Friends of the SP 794 will have a 1:1 scale steam locomotive on display.

Upcoming events include:

The March Division Meet was considered successful enough the folk want to do it again in early June. As I write this, details are still "TBD"; but by the time you are reading this a flyer should have already been sent out. If you are interested, but didn't get one, please contact me for details.

SAMRA will be holding their 13th Annual Summer Family Train Show on July 25-26 in San Antonio. Unfortunately, that is the same weekend as the TexLa Doodlebug in Beaumont.

The South Texas Division will have a busy October, two shows in one month. Alamo Model Railroad Engineers' (AMRE) will put on their 2015 Train Show October 3-4. And NBRM holds their 7th Annual Fall Train Show October 31- November 1.

Hours: 10-5 Saturday, 11-4 Sunday. It is a bit pricey, but they do offer 4 things to do, aside from the train show visiting layouts. Plus you can bring the other half, and they can visit the many shops-think spend money! Hope to see you there!

Also, let's not forget this year LSR Convention down in Beaumont. The TEX_LA Doodlebug! Larry and his folks are putting together a good one from what I hear. Again July 22-25, and the Hotel is a nice one, we had the Mid-Year Board meeting there in January, and I was impressed. A tidbit on info, this is the same place the KCS puts up their crews, so...was a bit of "ol' home week" for me, saw a number of train crews while I was there. Fun!!

I am sure it will be mentioned elsewhere, but the LSR, as a Region, now has its own 501(C-3) status, just like the NMRA. This opens up a whole lot of new possibilities for us, we need to thank Ms. Donna and Jeff for their hard work on getting this done for us, WAY TO GO!!! Thank You.

Otherwise it has been a quiet winter around here. Not have the Longview Show this year was a bit of a bummer, but things happen.

That is all I have now. I've got to get my taxes done last minute, so I hope to see everyone at one of the upcoming train shows.



Division 7
by Don Kimmell
elf4kcs@mac.com
318.798.7718

Hello again from green-and I mean really green, North Louisiana and North East Texas. You could say spring has arrived with the resulting list of "honey dos".

First off, upcoming train shows:

The Cotton Belt, Tyler Tap will be having their show on 25-26 April, at the Harvey Convention Center, 2000 West Front Street, 10-5 Sat & 10-4 Sun. Hope to see you there!

On Saturday May 9th, the "local" high rail (Lionel) will be having a one day show here in Shreveport, at River View Hall, 600 Clyde Fant Pkwy. Hours are 10-6, just Saturday.

Then on the following weekend in May 16& 17th, will be the Jefferson Train Days. This will be their 3rd year.



Texas Gulf Division 8
by Jim Lemond
jimlem@verzion.net

No report this quarter.



Click to join the Lone Star Region and the NMRA at nmra.org

Chair Reports



Nominations

by Blake Bogs

superchief1520@gmail.com

(713) 254-7447

Well once again, I'm writing this sitting in the commons of Lone Star College Tomball, waiting for class to start. This will be the last article I wrote from this college as I will be transferring in the fall. Change is constantly happening whether we like it or not. I look back at the past six years and think about everything that has changed. I have grown older, prices have gone up, friends have passed on, and finally time has flown by. Much of this time has been spent in school, work, and waiting.

Have you ever wondered how much time we spend waiting? We wait for work to start, wait for a class to start, or wait to start a train layout. Waiting is just time wasted. If you are waiting to start a layout, don't just stand around watching train films and think a layout is never going to happen. Go to your local hobby shop and buy some boxcars or tank car kits, start building a track plan, or just help keep model railroading alive by volunteering at a local, district, state, or national level.

Volunteering can be very rewarding. By volunteering, you can help keep our hobby alive and going for the next fifty plus years. If you are not interested in volunteering at the state level or in the President or Director Position, then help your local club or help the LSR by voting.

Before college, I used to be the person that just did nothing but buy trains. I only occasionally worked on trains. I attended meetings at the San Jac club, Petticoat Junction, and attended the LSR conventions. In 2010, I started getting more involved in trains when I started working at Larry's Hobbies. Working at Larry's led me to accept when Steve asked me to volunteer at a regional level as a nomination co-chair. Now, I volunteer in the LSR as the nomination chair, group coordinator for the Petticoat Junction group planning clinics and other events at Petticoat Junction, and many other jobs. I find these jobs and tasks to be extremely fun. I take pride in knowing that I am part of the future of the LSR.

The decisions and things I help with now affect what happens in the future. Every person we get involved in the LSR now is one more member that will hopefully be with us in our organization ten to twenty years from now.

On another note, Petticoat Junction had a successful open house meeting. We had a lot of great models come to the meeting and ended up signing two new people to the group email list and have reached 82 people on our email list. This is great progress for our group because we started out around forty-five to fifty email addresses. Over the last five months, we have had a great group of clinics. Since December, we have been having a clinic series on layout building. In December, Craig Brantley did a fantastic clinic on layout planning. In January, I performed a clinic of my article series, lessons learned on the Colorado Clear Creek. In February, Mark Couvillion did an informative clinic on Rolling Stock Tune Up. We took a break from clinics in March, having our open house meeting.

We are planning a lot more awesome clinics soon, so if you are in Houston on the first Friday of every month, I encourage you to come by and visit! I am extremely proud of how well this club is doing. We average around thirty members a meetings which is not bad considering in 2013, we reached 10 people per meeting. We always welcome new members, so if you are ever considering coming to a meeting, please come! Or email me at petticoatjunctionrr@gmail.com. We meet at Spring Creek Barbeque mostly on the first Friday of every month at 6:00PM. Our clinics start at 7:00 PM.

I would like to apologize for the ballot being late. There were several delays that I could not prevent. The 2015 elections period has ended on May 1st and results should be rolling in soon, if they have not already been posted on the LSR website. I appreciate everyone that voted during this election and will be letting you know what percentage of our members responded to the ballots this year. I am hoping we will eventually reach 50% of our members responding to the ballot and voting for our candidates.

You will see many changes coming to the ballot next year. I have been working with Jeff Palmer to convert the ballot to an online format. This would make voting for a candidate easier than buying a cup of coffee and would not cost you anything to send your ballot in. It also would greatly decrease the money spent on mailing for the LSR. One of

my goals as your Nomination Chair is to decrease any cost I can for the LSR. This would greatly decrease the mailing bill for the LSR and for you!

Now that the 2015 election is finished, we need candidates for the next election in 2016! Please strongly consider running for the LSR. Being a part of the LSR is fun, but BEING A PART of the LSR is even better. Our board needs people like you to run! The 2016 election consists of our 3 Directors-at-large, Division 2 Director, Division 4 Director, Division 6 Director, and Division 8 Director. If you even think you are or you know someone that are interested in running, please let me know! We need more people to volunteer and volunteering begins with members like you!

As always, if you have any questions, please email me at superchief1520@gmail.com or call me at 713-254-7447. If I'm available, I will be happy to answer. But if not, leave me a message and I will get back to you as soon as I can. See Y'all at LSR Convention in July!



Youth Program

by Bob Mangrum, MMR
rmangrum6@hotmail.com
(325) 643-1219

The Youth Membership Program is an excellent way for the members of the LSR to bring new and young members into the NMRA and to become involved in what is truly the "world's greatest hobby."

This is the objective of the Youth Membership Program as found in Article VI of the LSR bylaws. The program is designed to sponsor up to nine young people with one year memberships in the NMRA. The total number is determined as one nominee for each division and one nominated by the elected officers and directors at large.

These nominees can originate from nominations by individuals who are members of the various divisions, clubs that are located within the divisions, and/or the division director. The proper form and a short sketch explaining why the candidate should be considered, including comments about the young person's interests and activities in model railroading comprise the application. Please refer to the bylaws for more details. If you have questions, please contact me by e-mail at: rmangrum6@hotmail.com Looking forward to announcing more awards for 2015!



Treasurer
by Donna Orr
dlo-rls@sbcglobal.net
(972) 342-8598

Financial Report

For the Forth Fiscal Quarter of 2014/2015

Beginning Balance 02/01/2015	
LSR Checking Account	\$ 7,129.45
Vanguard CD Fund	\$20,358.39
Vanguard Convention Fund	\$10,005.18
Acct receivable for 2015 Convention	\$ 2,000.00
Total LSR Net Worth	\$39,493.02

Not included in Total LSR Net Worth
Funds for the Bob Clark Award \$570

LSR Proceeds	
Vanguard CD Fund Interest	\$.53
Vanguard Convention Fund Interest	\$.24
Pike/Dealer Ad	\$ 96.00
NMRA Region Rebate	\$ 980.00
Total Proceeds	\$ 1076.77

LSR Disbursements	
Election printing and mailing	\$ 694.77
Sec expenses	\$ 11.67
Convention 2016 Advance	\$ 1,050.00
501C3 Expense	\$ 400.00
Membership and Promotion expenses	\$ 80.00
Total Disbursements	\$ 2,236.44

Net Proceeds/ Disbursements \$ -1,159.67

Ending Balance 04/31/2015	
LSR Checking Accounts Total	\$ 5,969.01
Vanguard CD Fund	\$20,358.92
Vanguard Convention Fund	\$10,005.42
Acct receivable for 2015 Convention	\$2,000.00
Acct receivable for 2016 Convention	\$1,050.00
Total LSR Net Worth	\$39,383.35

Not included in Total LSR Net Worth
Funds for the Bob Clarke Award \$ 570.00

Membership Report

At the beginning of February 2015, the membership was 1310, and at the end of April 2015 the membership was 1054.

Please welcome our new members listed below:

Division 1
George Raunam Highland Tx
David Grein Denton Tx
Thomas Worley Ft Worth, Tx
Bob Stauter Trophy Club Tx
Jeff Ritter Richland Hills Tx
Joe Giesken Joshua Tx
James Carney Ft Worth Tx
Dick Brannan N Richland Hills Tx

Division 2
Michael Bushnell New Orleans La
Frederick Schulman Metairie La
Greg Gish Baton Rouge La
Joshua Concienne Zachary La

Division 3
Morgan Orphey Mesquite Tx
Pamela Martin Allen Tx
David Stana Frisco Tx
Marita RichardsAllen Tx
John Butler Mesquite Tx
Jason Williams Denison Tx
Thomas Whitrock Garland Tx
David Wacht Plano Tx
Darby Tipple Carrollton Tx
Evan Timmons Irving Tx
Owen Slatter Plano Tx
Ben Skidmore McKinney Tx
Michael Pixley Dallas Tx
Bill Perrott McKinney Tx
Antonio Perez Garland Tx
Jim Oursler Rockwall Tx
Vance Nurmi Garland Tx
Alan Helm Frisco Tx
Larry Galkowski Dallas Tx
Tom Foegle Allen Tx
Michael Elmore Plano Tx
Karla Dickensan Murphy Tx
Joseph Baker Allen Tx
Leena Agarwal Allen Tx

Division 4
Joel Davison Austin Tx

Division 5
William Hogan Lubbock Tx

Division 7
James Ingra Mt Vernon Tx

Division 8
Jeryl Schmidt Houston Tx
Chad Ponton Clute Tx
Mason Holmes Tomball Tx
Marvin Crews Cypress Tx
Christopher Kithas Katy Tx
Eddie Carroll Houston Tx
Gregory Slutz Bellaire Tx
Ronnie Rode Humble Tx

Division 1
Henry Stinson Fort Worth, Tx
Johnnie Harris Mansfield, Tx
Cameron Wallace Arlington, Tx



All about the community
of model railroading
and rail enthusiasm!

Proud supporter
of the
Lone Star Region

Cowcatcher

www.cowcatchermagazine.com

Dealer Ads

Advertise your layout here

...in color!

contact

DONNA ORR

972-342-8598

dlo-rs@sbcglobal.net

Pike Ads

Blackland Switching Company

www.texaszrail.com



Tom Browning MMR, Owner
5923 Over Downs Circle
Dallas, Texas 75230-4039

214-692-9784

thomascb2004@yahoo.com

Texas Western Model Railroad Club

6808 Forest Hill Drive, Forest Hill, TX 75140 (940) 547-3082



Building New HO & HOm3 Layout

Clinics

100% NMRA

Memberships Open

Home of the Texas Western Train Show

Thursdays 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Saturdays 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM

When Freight Needs

**Mighty
Muscles**



Lackawanna Railroad

Lackawanna
Railroad

BC&G
BAYOU CITY & GULF

www.houstonNrcrowd.org



B.E.D.T.

Tall Pine Lumber Company RR

West Coast Logging in On3

Chuck & Laurie Lind

3680 County Road 324

Navasota, Texas 77868

979-219-3305



Pennsylvania Railroad
Laurel Valley Secondary



Pittsburgh Division Circa 1957

Brady & Jane McGuire, Sherman, Texas

903-868-2726

Southwestern Pennsylvania in Texas O Scale

GRIZZLY RIDGE R.R.



1881 **Grrr** 1889

The Bear-ly Make It Route

A 6' Division of the

Ark-La-Tex Modular Club

Tom White

Haughton, La.

ACME
& MINERAL
CITY
RAILROAD

Bill Dryden

469-964-8571

Georgetown, Texas

bdr1149@airmail.net

Life Member NMRA & LSR

FARMERS GRAIN & TERMINAL

SHORTLINE RAILWAY

TIMETABLE No. 12

CHURCH LANE — COMMERCIAL ST.

W. J. Zahn

A. C. Zahn

PRES. - GEN. MGR.

TREAS. - DINING SUPT.

Tara Dawn Walker

PRY. & PASS. AGENT

Traffic Dept: 270-0702



Whether it's cars, bananas or bologne,
smart businessmen...



Riley Triggs | ponyrr.blogspot.com

Pike Ads

Your Pike Ad can be in color! Contact Donna Orr at dlo-rls@sbcglobal.net



We meet Thursdays 7 to 10PM, and the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month (10 AM to 4 PM). Business meeting, 1st Thursday of the month. Memberships open. From I-40, take the Lakeside exit (#75). Go north on Lakeside 2.2 miles to U. S. Highway 60. Turn right, go east 3.9 miles east. Turn right on I Ave., look for the yellow building with a red roof. P. O. Box 31105, Amarillo, TX 79120 (806) 336-3333. www.amarillorailmuseum.com



**MILWAUKEE
SOUTHWESTERN**

"THE LINDAS"
WACO, TEXAS

**WEST
VIRGINIA
WESTERN**

"THE SHINE LINE"
HOUSTON, TEXAS HO & 1 1/2" SCALE

COWTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

(Formerly the LMRA Railroad Club)

CMRRC



Fort Worth, Texas

An HO-scale, EasyDCC operating club rising from the ashes of a club that was forced to relocate and is in the process of constructing a new layout. Visit our website for membership and contact information.

Gold Rail Award Winner 2009, 2010 & 2013

www.cmrcc.webs.com

THE SOUTH SIDE AND RIO MESA Dallas, Texas



An HO club layout being built to operate! Featuring DCC, signaling, train detection, computerized dispatching and car forwarding.

We currently have openings for all interests and skill levels. Join us Tuesdays at 7:30 in the historic Sears Catalog Warehouse - now the South Side on Lamar Building just south of the convention center in downtown Dallas.

www.railroadmodelers.com



**Graham Branch
Southern Division**

"Serving Jacksboro Since 1898"

Elbert Smith, Supt.
Garland, TX
972-681-0117
barbel_518@sbcglobal.net



**DAWCHA SOUTHERN
RAILWAY CO.**

IRON HORSE ROUTE

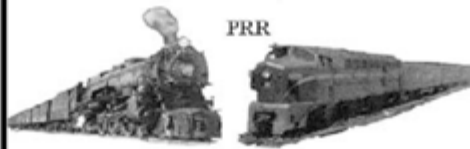


CHARLIE SPANGLER, PRES.
830-885-4515

2351 Rolling Creek
Spring Branch, Tx 78070-5656



THE ALLEGHENY RAILROAD
HORSESHOE CURVE
ALTOONA



Jerry Schoenberg
Carrollton, Texas (972) 242-9053
arrjerry@aol.com



www.dovetailstudio.com/trains

Galveston Model Railroad
Club and Museum

314 27th Street
Galveston TX 77550



Gilbert Freitag Houston, Texas

NEVADUN RAILROAD

Jim Packer
Colleyville, Texas 76034
817-514-7291
E-mail - jim.packer@sbcglobal.net
Website - WWW.NEVADUNRAILROAD.COM



San Antonio Model Railroad Association

Located in the Bob Clarke Heritage Rail Museum
4000 Sq. Ft. Layout and Museum
7702 Narrow Pass, Live Oak, Texas 78233

Meetings are 2nd Friday of every month, 7:30pm

Two Big Train Shows Every Year in January and July

Visit www.samratx.org for details and to order San Antonio & Northern LSR Commemorative Boxcars
Or call Ron Nagel 210 651-5188

Art Houston's
Grande Pacific Model Railroad
Houma, LA
GrandePacificModelRR.org
YouTube Channel: arthurhouston3

MID SOUTH RAILROAD CLUB
BATON ROUGE, LA

MEETINGS: EVERY TUESDAY @ 7:00PM
HO WALK AROUND WITH NCE-DCC
SANTAFE@TLXNET.NET



*We are empty
without you*

**Next Issue
August 2015**

Deadline for
submissions is
July 15



submittals and inquiries | rileytriggs@gmail.com